

91064



The Place of God in Advaita.

(*From the standpoint of Dvaita.*)

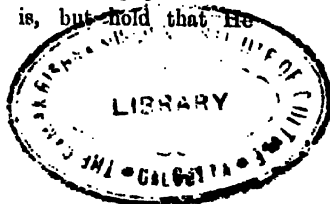
By

H. N. RAGHAVENDRACHAR

(By "The place of God in *Advaita*." I mean two things — (1) God's place in *Advaita* and (2) *Advaita* God's place in the world of thought. By *Advaita* I mean the whole system of *Advaita* as handed down to us through tradition. I represent the spirit of the whole system in the name of *Sāṅkarācārya*. Similar is the consideration with regard to *Dvaita*.)

1. The meaning of the term God with reference to *Advaita*.

The term God is commonly applied to the creator who is at the same time the ultimate principle in the universe. With this meaning it is not applicable to *Advaita*. In *Advaita* the Creator is determinate (*saguṇa*) and is therefore not the Ultimate, and the Ultimate is indeterminate (*nirguṇa*) and is therefore not the Creator. So the title "The place of God in *Advaita*" is not intelligible. To somehow justify the title the term God is to be specially interpreted. It is usual with some to take it to mean the Determinate God (*Saguṇa Brahman*). But it does not fully satisfy the spirit of the present enquiry. The present enquiry is philosophical. It has the Ultimate in view. To justify this we may understand by 'God' in the title the Indeterminate (*Nirguṇa Brahman*). This meaning has also a reference to the Determinate God. Some eminent writers on this subject also have understood the same meaning by the term. *Jayatīrtha* says in his *Nyāya Sudhā* "Others (*Advaitins*) say that God is, but hold that He



is in fact indeterminate" (Anyetū punarastyeveśvaraḥ kintū paramārthato nirguṇa eveti saṅgirante). A. S. Geden says in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, p 285, "(In Vedānta) God is...one only without a second." It is evident that the secondless God in *Advaita* is the Indeterminate.

2. The occasion for the Doctrine of the Indeterminate in *Advaita*.

Saṅkarācārya, the founder of the Doctrine of the Indeterminate, appears to have taken from the Upaniṣadic passages "From which all these elements.....that is Brahman (Yatovā imāni bhūtāni...tatbrahma)", "Brahman is real, knowledge and limitless (Satyam jñānāmanantam Brahma)" and "Brahman is one only without a second (Ekamevadvitīyam Brahma)" the suggestion that Brahman is the Ultimate and all else is dependent on it. To establish the truth of it against the theories current at his time he formulates the conception of the Indeterminate in his system called *Advaita*.

3. The conception of the Indeterminate.

The Indeterminate, as the very name indicates, is not the subject of any enquiry. Strictly speaking, there can be no conception of it at all. Yet the founder, with the idea that it can at least be pointed to, makes use of several considerations, Logical, Psychological, Metaphysical, Cosmological and Religious.

i. The Logical Considerations.

Following the implication of the recognition "The same is the knowledge that apprehended an object then and apprehends now another object", he distinguishes between two types of knowledge, the Identical and the Particular. His idea is that without the former the recognition is meaningless and without the latter it is itself impossible. He takes up the former. He observes that in order to be identical it must be eternal. He further notes that it is

not revealed by anything external to it and in this sense calls it self-evident (*Svayamjyotiḥ*). From this he concludes that it is evident as a whole. He takes this to imply that it is devoid of all external and internal distinctions. To present this idea he calls it Partless (*Akhaṇḍa*). He further supports the same conclusion negatively by showing that it cannot be otherwise. This is his explanation. To deny its eternal character is to deny it at a point of time. This is absurd. For it is presupposed in its very denial. To deny that it is self-evident is to hold that it is made evident by an external agent. This is to presume that it is never presented, since that agent also needs to be revealed by another agent. To hold that it is never presented is to deny it and it is shown how this conclusion is wrong. Further, to hold that it is not partless is to make it involve distinctions relative to one another. This is to accept that it is not presented as a whole and therefore not self-evident. It is seen how this conclusion is wrong. In these considerations he does not attribute the properties, partlessness etc. to it. Because as partless it has no attributes. So he takes his description of it as having only a negative significance. That it is eternal only stands for the idea that it is not non-eternal; that it is self-evident for that it is not non-self-evident; and that it is partless for that it is not non-partless. To imply this he calls it *Cit*. He deduces great things from this conception. He takes up the question of the relation of the particular knowledge which he calls *vytti* to *Cit*. Since *Cit* is partless and has nothing external to it, he concludes that *vytti* is only superimposed on it. As the ground of *vytti* it is called *Nirguṇam Brahma*.

ii. The Psychological Considerations.

He has to show the origin of superimposition. To do this he examines the three states of human experience,—

waking, dreaming and sleep. Since the former two follow the third he concludes that the latter must be the origin of the former. To illustrate this he analyses the latter. But there is nothing direct in it to help the analysis. So he takes up for examination the thought "I slept happily and I did not know anything," that happens to the individual just after sleep. This thought refers to an experience which must be in sleep itself. The experience must be of happiness and non-knowledge. The happiness here is not the negation of misery. Because the thought of the negation of misery presupposes the thought of misery itself. But sleep would be impossible with the thought of misery. So the happiness is positive. For similar reasons non-knowledge must also be positive. To posit the absence of knowledge is in a sense to posit knowledge itself. But with knowledge sleep is impossible. So there is the experience of positive happiness and positive non-knowledge in sleep. Since *Cit* is partless, its relation to *Cit* must be that of superimposition. Of the two things experienced in sleep happiness has no other source. On this basis he concludes that it is an aspect of *Cit*. But non-knowledge is different from *Cit*. To imply this he calls it *acit*.* So there are two things *Cit* and *acit* in sleep.

The partless *Cit* is not the source of anything. Therefore he holds that *acit* is the source of the other two states. From the thought that there is no knowledge of other objects in sleep, he concludes that there is no 'I' then. To account for the idea of 'I' in the other states he holds that it is produced just when the sleep is over. He further holds that *acit* is the cause of it. He makes it the knower

*Mr. Y. Subbarao, the author of '*Mūlavidyānirāsa*' disputes Śaṅkarācārya's acceptance of *acit*. Here the orthodox position is expounded.

only from the standpoint of *vṛtti*. So in truth he understands by 'I' in "I slept happily, etc", *Cit* qualified by *acit*. All the three states happen to the same individual. There is nothing else to connect them together. To account for their connection he regards *Cit* itself as witnessing all and in this sense calls it *sākṣi*. So far he has reduced the whole of an individual's experience to *acit* with *Cit* as its ground (*adhiṣṭhāna*). This is to show that *acit* is the cause of superimposition.

iii. The Metaphysical Considerations.

On the basis of the same idea that *Cit* is partless he holds that *acit* with its relation to *Cit* is superimposed on *Cit*. Their reality is made impossible by the latter. So from the standpoint of *Cit* they are sublated (*bādhita*). But *Cit* is the very presupposition of their superimposition. So it is not sublated. *Acit* appears even though it is sublated. From this he concludes that it is not unreal (*asat*). He regards *Cit* real in the sense that it is never sublated. So *acit* is neither real nor unreal (*sadasadvilakṣaṇa*). To indicate this idea he calls it *mithyā*.

From the idea that *Cit* is real, he deduces that the real is eternal, self-evident and partless. From this he concludes that all that is not eternal (*anitya* and *savikāra*), not self-evident (*dr̥śya*), and not partless (*paricchinna*) is *mithyā*. He substantiates this position by showing that nothing of it is self-sufficing. This may be illustrated by taking, for instance, distinction (*bheda*). It is in a distinct thing. But in order to be there it requires another distinction. It is therefore not self-sufficing and is *mithyā*. For similar reasons he considers the whole world to be *mithyā*. He carries the spirit of this consideration to the empirical presentation of *Cit* and regards it as *mithyā*. He holds the pure *Cit* as the Ultimate. In this sense he calls it *Brahman*. It is the presupposition of all philosophy about

it. So the function of philosophy is not to prove it but to remove the counter thoughts about it. To convey this idea he calls his system *Advaita*.

iv. The Cosmological Considerations.

He further substantiates the thought that Brahman is the Cosmic Ground. From the standpoint of the individuality of a person's experience, he holds him to be empirically different from other individuals. Consistently with the spirit of this idea he takes the world to consist of innumerable individuals with their experiences and objects corresponding to these. The idea that a person's experience is conditioned by *acit*, to which he gives another name, *avidyā*, to imply that it obscures the truth, is applied to the cosmic experience. To make room for individual experience he distinguishes the cosmic condition from *avidyā* and calls it *māyā*. Just as *Cit* with *avidyā* is the origin of an individual, so *Cit* with *māyā* is the origin of the cosmos. Consistently with this idea he considers the cosmic ground to form both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. As the material cause it unfolds the universe. As the efficient cause it knows all about the creation with the power to bring it out. To present this idea he calls it *Īśvara* or *Saguṇa Brahma*. *Avidyā* and *māyā* are the aspects of the same *acit*. Yet he has to distinguish between the imperfect individual and the perfect *Īśvara*. To do this, while he takes *avidyā* as deluding the individual he takes *māyā* as conferring overlordship and the consequent perfection on *Īśvara*. *Īśvara* is, on account of the *māyā* element in him, *mithyā*. So his place in *Advaita* is in substance that of the world. Though he may be called God only in a secondary sense, he is in fact no God if by 'God' we mean the Ultimate. His ground is *Cit*. Consistently with the idea of *Īśvara* as the origin of the world, he traces the world into five categories, that which is (*asti*), that which appears (*bhāti*), that which is

liked (*priya*), form (*rūpa*) and name (*nāma*). The first three represent *Cit* and the last two *māyā*.

v. The Religious Considerations.

So far he has shown that *Cit* or *Brahman* is the ultimate ground of all. He strengthens the same position by showing that it is possible for an individual to realise Brahman. He arrives at the idea of this possibility by analysing 'I'. He distinguishes between two types of factors in it. In one sense it is changeless, most liked, all-witnessing, self-evident and enduring in all objects, senses etc. And in another it is miserable, changing, inert and different from objects, senses etc. Each of them is opposed to the other. Yet the former which represents *Cit* asserts its reality against the latter which represents *acit*. This suggests that the latter can be removed by the knowledge of the former. When it is removed all that is is *Cit* or *Brahman*. This is *mukti*. The bondage and its removal are alike *mithyā*.

4. The place of Śaṅkarācārya's God both in *Advaita* and in the world of thought as he himself takes it to be.

In the light of the foregoing considerations he holds that Brahman as real, changeless, self-evident and partless is one only without a second, and It is the ground of all that appears. This is his God in the real sense of the term. He takes it to be the same as the Upaniṣadic Absolute. He thinks that he has established the truth of it against the doctrines current at his time. His idea is this: Brahman, the ground of the world, is real and is therefore different from the *Śūnya* of the Buddhists. It is eternal and partless and is therefore different from the *Vijñāna* of the *Vijñāna-Vādins*. It is one. So the doctrine of many real things does not hold good. As *Cit* it is the source of the Universe. So the doctrine that holds that *Prakṛti* is the independent source of all is wrong. The fact that It is changeless and partless

falsifies the doctrine that Brahman changes. To show that his philosophy is the same as that of the Upaniṣads he calls it *Vealānta*. *Advaita* or *Vealānta* according to him stands for the idea that the Indeterminate Brahman is the Ultimate.

5. Some general remarks about his philosophy.

With him the thought of the independent reality of Brahman (God) and the dependent reality of the world, the untruth of the doctrines that are opposed to it are all commendable. But the system he actually expounded has nothing to do with it. In fact, it does not differ from the doctrines he tried to refute. Not only this. The spirit of his ideas results in the denial of all including even the Ultimate. So there followed many oppositions to his system. Among the leaders of the opposition *Madhvācārya* is the most thoroughgoing. He clearly perceived the nihilistic implications of *Advaita*. To avoid them and to preserve the reality of the Upaniṣadic Brahman, he expounded the system of *Dvaita*. From this standpoint his system may be viewed as forming an improvement on *Advaita*. A reference to his criticisms against *Advaita* makes this idea clear.

6. *Madhvācārya's* Criticisms against *Advaita*.

If in the light of the Upaniṣadic teaching we have to preserve the sole reality of Brahman, then it is not necessary to regard Brahman as indeterminate. It is held in *Advaita* that the world has no reality of its own and for this reason it is said to be *mithyā*. The underlying idea of this is that which is independent is real. If Brahman is real in this sense, then to preserve Its reality it is not necessary to make It indeterminate. Nor is it necessary to deny even the dependent reality of the world. The Upaniṣadic passage, "Brahman is one only without a second," may be taken to mean that Brahman is the only independently real. The world as having dependent reality is not opposed to this meaning. So both Brahman and the world are real. Any

definition of the real must have in view the reality of both. A thing may be regarded as real in various senses. It is real if it has being, individuality, function or knowledge. Both the world and Brahman are real in all these senses. But the difference between them is that the former is dependent while the latter is independent. In the light of this consideration, Brahman is determinate though It is the ultimate and It does not require the unreality of the world. This is the true implication of the Upaniṣadic teaching. Denying this *Advaita* is sublated by the Upaniṣads. The same idea may be further explained in the following manner.

7. The Indeterminate is not real.

'The conception of the Indeterminate is impossible.' It is therefore not real. It is said in *Advaita* that it yet can be pointed to. It is wrong. The state of being pointed to is the same as the state of being the object of conception. To have the conception of a thing is to have the idea of it as distinct from other things. The same idea is presented by pointing to it. Otherwise there is no meaning in pointing to it. Further the conception of a thing is the necessary presupposition of pointing to it. Unless one has the idea of a thing how can one point to it? So without the conception of the indeterminate there can be no pointing to it. But to hold that the indeterminate is the object of conception is a contradiction in terms. The object of conception is as a rule determinate. Therefore the indeterminate is in no sense real

i. The Logical Considerations in *Advaita* are meaningless.

The Logical considerations in *Advaita* are based on the strength of the recognition "The same knowledge that apprehended an object then apprehends now another object." If there is a recognition like this, then it only proves the

similarity of knowledge but not the identity of it. As referring to identity it is not a fact. There is the recognition rather in a different form, as "The same knower that apprehended an object then apprehends now another object." But this only proves the identity of the knower. So the classification of knowledge in *Advaita* is groundless.

Supposing even that there is identical knowledge, to characterise it as eternal, self-evident and partless in the *Advaita* sense of the terms is irrelevant. Whether the significance of this characterisation is positive or negative, it equally denies that knowledge is partless. There is in fact no vital difference between the positive and the negative significance. A positive quality can be negatively attributed—as, for example, "He is not without wisdom." A negative one can be positively attributed, e. g. "It is fallacious." Further, whether a quality is positive or negative, it is attributed to a thing to distinguish it from other things. If knowledge is so distinguished by its attributes, then to talk of it as partless is meaningless.

Knowledge is said to be self-evident in *Advaita*. But at the same time it is made the object neither of itself nor of anything else. This is nothing but the denial of knowledge. If knowledge is, then it must be evident to itself. This means that it is not partless.

If it is not partless, then it is not necessary to hold that *vytti* is superimposed on it. Both may be equally real. Following the spirit of these thoughts, we can only say this much: "There are two types of knowledge, the self-evident and *vytti*. The former reveals both itself and *vytti*. It is an attribute of a knower. This is why the form of experience is "I know this or that object." "The knower is eternal and self-evident." So the *Cit* of *Advaita* is a myth unless it is made the same as the knower.

ii. The Psychological Considerations in *Advaita* are false.

In *Advaita* the knower is said to be absent in sleep. If it were true, then there is no occasion for the recognition "I slept happily, etc." To hold that the experiencer in sleep is one thing and the later recogniser is another is to deny the very possibility of thought. So in the light of the recognition we have to hold that the 'I' endures in sleep and there is nothing superimposed on it.

iii. There is no occasion for the Metaphysical considerations in *Advaita*.

Acit is held to be *mithyā* in *Advaita* on the basis that it is superimposed. Here the reasoning is fallacious. That which is superimposed may not be real. But its like must be real. The silver superimposed on a shell may not be real. But its like—the silver, must somewhere be real. Without such silver there can be no idea of silver and without it there can be no superimposition of it. Further, without a knower there can be no superimposition. Without one who perceives at least an aspect of a shell there can be no superimposition of silver on it. Similarly, the superimposition of *acit* on *Cit* is impossible without the reality of its like and the person who is the author of superimposition. So to hold that superimposition is the origin of *acit* as such is putting the cart before the horse. Further, unless the entity that is superimposed is similar to that on which it is superimposed, there can be no superimposition. Unless a shell is similar to silver, the latter cannot be superimposed on the former. If *acit* is superimposed on *Cit*, then the latter must be similar to the former. But *Cit* is similar to nothing. So the superimposition of *acit* is not possible. If there is similarity between the two, then *Cit* is not partless.

So *Cit* and *acit* must be equally real. The *Advaita* definition that the real is *Cit* is wrong. *Cit* is imaginary. In the light of experience the real is that which exists in time and

space. So exists the world and it is therefore real. That which does not exist so is unreal,—for instance, the horn of a hare. So the real and the unreal are contradictory; and the conception of *mithyā saśavadvilakṣaṇa* is a contradiction in terms.

The real is necessarily relative. So all the *Advaita* arguments employed against the reality of the world prove in fact its reality. For they only mean the relative character of the world. This position negates the significance of *Advaita* and in its place asserts the reality of *Dvaita*.

iv. The Cosmological Considerations in *Advaita* prove nothing.

The whole universe is real. Its ground must be sought for so as to preserve its reality. The *Advaita* account that *Cit* with *māyā* i.e. *Īśvara*, is the ground of the world is wrong. *Cit* and *māyā* cannot be brought together. *Cit* is illumination. *Acit* is not so. The superimposition of each on the other is impossible. If it is possible, then both as superimposed must be unreal. To preserve the reality of *Cit* it is said in *Advaita* that only the relation of *Cit* is superimposed on *acit*. This is a convenient fiction. The same might be said with regard to the superimposition of *acit* and its reality preserved. It is said in *Advaita* that *Cit* is not opposed to *māyā*. This is to deny the self-evident character of *Cit*. It may as well be held that the partless *Cit* is not opposed to the reality of *acit*.

The so-called *Īśvara* really consists of two factors entirely different from each other. Therefore the ground of the world is not one. The idea that the same entity is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe is wrong. Hence the conception of *Īśvara* breaks down. Granting that he is, he must know and do. But to do both is impossible unless he is deluded. Because anything that appears to be other than *Cit* is the result of delusion in *Advaita*. Delusion is only another

name of superimposition. If he is deluded, then there can be creation. In this case the distinction between *avidyā* and *māyā* is meaningless.

So the Cosmological considerations in *Advaita* reduce all to nothing. They are due to the unwarranted assumption that the world is not real. If the world is real, then only it has a real ground. Such ground may be called *Īśvara*. As such he is independent and therefore the ultimate. And the world is dependent and therefore non-ultimate.

v. The Religious Considerations in *Advaita* are irrelevant.

Consistently with the position just now developed, the true aim of religion would be as follows. If *Īśvara* is the independent source of the universe, then the bondage of an individual soul is due to his false thought that he is independent. With the realisation that he is dependent, he finds his self in *Īśvara*, his true abode. He is no longer subject to any bondage. This is the aim of religion.

But this is not the case with *Advaita*. There the realisation of *Cit* is said to be the aim of religion. We have seen how *Cit* is impossible. Even though it is possible it is partless and therefore not the subject of any realisation. Further *vytti* is said to be the means of this realisation. But *vytti* is false. The false cannot remove the false. So if *Cit* is, then there can be no bondage; and if bondage is, then there can be no *Cit*. *Advaita* helps neither.

8. Concluding remarks.

The conception of God in *Advaita* does not touch the problem at hand. The problem is about the source of the individual and his relation to the world. It is to solve this that the question of God is taken up. The *Advaita* account of the Indeterminate negates the very problem. Nor does it justify the Upaniṣadic thought. The Upaniṣads have in view a real *Īśvara* as the ground of a real world. But the Indeterminate has nothing to do with him.

Nor is the position of *Advaita* really different from the doctrines that its founder wanted to refute. The world as superimposed is unreal. The Indeterminate is nothing. So the position is not different from the *Sūnyavāda*. *Cit* is made the ground of all. So the position is not in substance different from the *Vijñānavāda*. The world is traced to *Cit* and *acit*. So the oneness of the ground is not attained. The partless *Cit* has no effective relation to *acit* and therefore *acit* is the real source of all. This position is not different from the *Prakṛtiparināmavāda*. *Īvara* as representing *Cit* must be the material cause of the world. So this position is not different from *Brahmaparināmavāda*. If he does not represent *Cit*, then he is no *Īvara*.

As it has all along been indicated, if *Advaita* is to be consistent as a philosophy and do justice to the teaching of the Upaniṣads, then all about its *qualitiless entity*, *objectless knowledge*, *ultimatenessless ultimate*, and the *wholesale unreality of the world we actually live in* must be abandoned. Its *Cit* must be viewed as representing an *individual knower*, as a *real cogniser in a real world*. Its indeterminate Brahman must be taken to stand for *that which is transcendently perfect*.

But to make this improvement is to accept the reality of both the individual knower and the world even though they are dependent on Brahman. If this position is adopted, then *Advaita* as signifying the conception of God loses all its propriety. It may at best be interpreted as standing for the idea that the independently real is one. But in this case the reality of the world is not denied. For that the world is not independent and that it is unreal are not the same. So the independent and the dependent are both real. To signify this idea the position may conveniently be called *Dvaita*. The term *Dvaita* simply means that the Independent and the dependent are not one. Their difference is given

in their very idea. Difference is an essential aspect of every thing. Without it a thing is not. Without it even the Indeterminate cannot be had. The Indeterminate is indeterminate because it is different from the determinate. So to deny difference is to deny all. The term *Advaita* as implying the denial of it is only a word signifying little. So there is every propriety in calling the relation between the Independent and the dependent by the name *Dvaita*. This is exactly the position that is expounded by *Madhvācārya*. This position does not separate the world from Brahman. It rather brings them together without affecting the nature of either. Having these considerations in mind we may fruitfully hold that *Dvaita* is only an improvement on *Advaita*. With this improvement the Indeterminate God becomes the God that is Transcendently Perfect, and the *mithyā* world becomes dependently real. So to deny the world is to deny *Brahman*. The world is an indication of the perfection of *Brahman*. So the idea of the perfection of Brahman involves that of the reality of the world

It is interesting to note in this connection that some thoughtful writers on *Advaita* have dimly felt the truth of the position just mentioned. To illustrate this some passages from "*The Outlines of Indian Philosophy*" by my revered teacher, Prof. M. Hiranna, may be quoted. In page 88, the author says, "The Upaniṣads, though setting forth the doctrine of the Absolute, exhibit a development particularly on theistic and realistic lines." Here he abandons the orthodox *Advaita* view that the whole of the Upaniṣadic teaching is in favour of *Advaita*. The orthodox view is in fact the reason why *Advaita* is called *Vedānta*. In so far as he modifies this position he accepts the view that the system which is developed on theistic and realistic lines, that is, *Dvaita* as he seems to take it to be, is also *Vedānta*. In page 372, he says that Brahman does not depend on the

world for its being. This only means that Brahman is independent. But, from this, that Brahman is indeterminate does not follow. In page 373, he says that to term *Brahman* as *nirguna* 'only means that nothing which the mind can think of actually belongs to it.' Here the author is not satisfied with the genuine position of *Advaita*. He improves upon it by attributing transcendent qualities to *Brahman*. We have seen how this is exactly the position of *Dvaita*. Again, in the same page, he says, "...an appearance which can never be independent necessarily signifies a reality beyond itself." (The Buddhistic thinkers do not admit the soundness of this reasoning.) Granting somehow that it is valid, it only points to the truth of the Independent *Brahman* but not of *Nirguna Brahman*. In page 375, he says, "Even granting that the negative definition is the only possible one it does not follow that *Nirguna Brahman* is a blank. For all propositions directly or indirectly refer to reality and negation necessarily has its positive implication." Here the author makes all the negative descriptions of *Brahman* in *Advaita* positive. This improvement, on the one hand, negates the truth of the *Nirguna* and, on the other, asserts the truth of *Saguna* in its place. This is exactly the position of *Dvaita* though it is not recognised to be such by the author. Whatever the other details may be, these passages on the whole admit the transcendent qualities of *Brahman* and the dependent reality of the world; and this sublates the true spirit of *Advaita*. We may note that the so called Absolutism of the author is indeed *Dvaita*.

So *Advaita* with all its excellence is not free from inconsistencies. But without them it becomes *Dvaita*. *Dvaita* as philosophy is sound and it is the only proper *Vedānta*.

The Place of God in Advaita.—ii

By

P. P. S. SASTRI.

In philosophy, as in religion, "God" signifies that Being from whom the universe has its source; He is different from the world of finite intelligences as well as from the material world, though the degrees of difference vary in the two cases. God in some systems does not create the finite souls, as He creates the material world; and the soul in advaita differs from God only as the reflection from the prototype. But God is called such only in so far as He is distinguished from the soul and considered to be in some relation to it. God is the conservator of life's goods and the comforter in life's sorrows. Any Being that transcends happiness and misery, that does not recognise a distinct soul to be cheered and comforted, any undetermined Being that is called the Absolute or Ultimate cannot be called God; and it is not so called in the advaita system. The term most closely approximating to God is *Īśvara*; there is a place for *Īśvara* in the advaita; that may or may not be a satisfactory account of *Īśvara*, but there is no justification for what Mr. Raghavendrachar has done—the identification of God with the Ultimate. His paper then is for the most part an *ignoratio elenchi*. Since, however, the present paper arises out of the other and is expected to meet its arguments, some attempt is made to do this.

I

The dvaitin has always resorted to the trick of setting up dummies and knocking them down. The characterisation of the advaitin's Brahman as indeterminate is a case in point. The indeterminate is the characterless; it is a blank, a void (*śūnya*); it is against such a conception of the advaitin's Absolute that Prof. Hiriyanna so rightly protests (see p.375, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*). The Absolute is undetermined, while

the finite by its very nature is determined. The finite, however, is not determinate; for, to be determinate is to have character, to have self subsistent reality unaffected by change from within or without. Such character (not characterisation or characteristic) belongs truly to the Absolute alone. To call that the indeterminate is to prejudge the case against the advaitin, making him out to be no better than a śūnyavādin. The Absolute is the undetermined.

What is the justification for maintaining not merely that the undetermined is real, but also that it is the sole real? The answer comes from our conception of reality. When in our everyday experience we claim something to be real and dismiss something else as unreal, what is it that we employ as our criterion? Uniformity, consistency, persistence, not being subject to variation by adventitious circumstances, non-sublation, in a word. Dreams, we say, are unreal, because they are sublated. We take waking experience to be real, because its sublation is not seen so far. But so long as there is another place or time or thing we have not experienced, what we now experience is subject to the possibility of sublation. To guard against sublation effectively one must, therefore, look for reality in what is above determination, whether in space or time, or by any other object. Hence the conception of the undetermined as the sole real.

But even in this statement we seem to contradict ourselves. If the real is the undetermined, how can there be a conception thereof? The answer is that the undetermined is conceived of not as a term in a thinking relation, but as the non-relational ground of all thinking and other relations. Conception does not grasp it, but indicates it as its own fulfilment, wherein it, as conception, ceases to be. This we claim, is not intellectually unintelligible, though it cannot be fully comprehended by the intellect because of the very nature of the Absolute as transcending thought. Let us assume for a moment the

unintelligibility of our view : Is the rival view that reality is the determined any more intelligible ? We have, one may say, a conception of the determined. Was it determined or not prior to the conception ? If it was determined, does the conception add to its determination ? If so, does it not inevitably distort its object ? If not, what is this relation called thinking which makes no difference to its terms ? If the difference be for the thinking subject, does not the determined object undergo a further modification, as affecting the subject ? If so, is not the object of conception different from the object in itself ? If so, can the latter ever be known as it is ? Again, if the object of conception was undetermined prior to conception, how is this different from our account ? Surely, on this alternative, it is nearer the truth to conceive of the undetermined as undetermined, rather than as determined.

Further, how can any cognition be primarily of the determined ? To be so, it must not only affirm what a thing is, but also deny what it is not. This function of negation presupposes the knowledge of both the substrate of the negation (say, 'rose') and of the counter-correlate (say, "blueness"). The cognitions of these,—are they of the determined ? If so, they too imply negations, which in turn imply cognitions of the respective substrates and counter-correlates. Unless we stop somewhere at a cognition of the undetermined, there is infinite regress; and even what is supposed to be known, the cognition of the determined, becomes unintelligible. That is why the advaitin finds himself forced to admit a final cognition which is non-relational and is of the impartite (akhaṇḍa). This cognition is not itself the undetermined; it thus falls short of the real, and in so far forth may be called false; but none the less it has the capacity to remove all lower grades of falsehood; that the false can destroy the false is not a meaningless paradox, as the water of the dream can quench the thirst of the dream. True, the sublatter is also sublated in turn; but this is not unintelligi-

ble or in conflict with even ordinary experience. The fire that consumes the faggot finally consumes itself.

II

In what he calls the metaphysical considerations, Mr. Raghavendrachar does no justice to himself or to the advaitin. The advaitin through a series of cogent arguments, shows the entire world of difference to be illusory. Perception, inference, presumption, all lead to the same conclusion, as the Vivaraṇīcārya says. The world of particulars cannot claim absolute reality, since it is perceived to perish in the very same locus where it was perceived. The nacre that is seen to perish in the "this" where it was perceived is not admitted to be real. The case is no different with the pot or cloth that was perceived, but is not now perceived. Nor may it be said that the sublation is not of the entity, but only of its spatial, temporal or other properties. For, in the case of these properties, since they do not possess other spatial and temporal properties of their own, unconditional sublation should be admitted; and what is possible in respect of the properties may be possible in respect of the thing itself. There is inference too to the effect that because of their differences co-existent with a common nature, as existent, the particulars are superimposed on a basic identity. And since what is not illusory, say Brahman, is known to be neither originated nor destroyed, it is presumed that the entire world of particulars, for which there is origination and destruction, is illusory. The world, however, cannot be wholly unreal, like the horns of a hare, as then it would not be presented at all. Hence the postulation of its difference from the real as well as the unreal, of its essential indeterminability. Nor may it be urged that to accept the indeterminable is to violate a fundamental law of thought. What happens here is not the acceptance of two opposites (which is absolutely unwarranted), but the rejection of two opposites; the latter is not unjustified

unless it is shown that the opposites are also contradictories; and despite the apparent contradiction in verbal form between "sat" and "asat", they should be admitted in the light of experience to be but contraries; for there is a whole world of appearances, which are neither real like Brahman, nor unreal like a barren woman's son.

III

Pure intelligence as defined by indeterminable māyā is the Jīva. A plurality of Jīvas is established in experience; hence there must be a plurality of māyās as their determinants. These māyās, being impure cannot find a location in the absolutely taintless Brahman. The ignorance is about Brahman; but it belongs to and is located in the Jīva.

In this scheme, where Brahman is the unconditioned and the Jīva is the avidyā-conditioned, where is the room for a God? He cannot be the unconditioned, for that is Brahman. He cannot be the conditioned, for that would reduce him to the status of a jīva. He is not the cause of the conditioning, since this is beginningless. To say that Īśvara is conditioned by māyā does not, as Mr. Raghavendrachar remarks, remove him far from the migrating soul; for, there is no distinction between māyā and avidyā, except as between the collective and the distributive, or as between the relatively pure and the relatively impure. The truth of this criticism does not affect the advaitin, for, in no case does he seek to identify Īśvara with the ultimate. That conception is real in so far as it works; but in the last resort that too is fictitious. But there are relatively intelligible ways of viewing this. On the principle that the offering is proportionate to the demon, a fictitious Īśvara may well fulfil all the demands of a jīva that is itself fictitious.

What happens may be thus conceived. The jīva is enveloped in nescience located in himself. As a consequence,

though he is in reality identical with the one secondless Absolute, he feels limited in time and in space and by other objects, intelligent and non-intelligent ; though of the essential nature of intelligence, he feels his cognitive capacities limited to particular objects and particular means ; though having no desires to satisfy or purposes to fulfil, he finds himself limited to acting in specific ways for specific ends with uncertain success ; as the logical presupposition of such limited capacities, known to be limited, he feels compelled to project not a being that is essential knowledge, but one that is the ~~recogniser~~ cogniser of all, not a being that has no purposes, but one that has all purposes fulfilled. This postulated Being is common to all jīvas ; for, whatever their starting-point, they arrive at the conception of the possession of all capacities ; they agree in what God is, though they may differ in their conceptions of the mode in which He is a complement to each of them. This God has māyā as adjunct, for, if He were adjunctless, He would be knowledge, not knower. But by the very conditions of the postulation, He is not *conditioned* by māyā, as jīvas are. While jīvas are māyā-bound, Īśvara is the controller of māyā (māyām tu prakṛtiṁ vidyāt, māyinaṁ tu mahēśvaraṁ) ; He is limited by māyā only in so far as He should have something to control.

This conception of Īśvara remains, however, still on the level of the dualistic conception of the world. It implies distinction among finite intelligences and from the supreme intelligence, also from what is non-intelligent. But it gives room for moving on to non dualism when these distinctions are transcended māyā apprehended as phenomenal, and Brahman realised to be the sole real. That is why the advaitin finds it possible to admit Īśvara. So long as there is ignorance, it is bi-polar, involving a distinction of locus from content. It is located in the jīva and refers to Īśvara.

The being with finite powers posits not an infinite being, but a being with infinite powers. God is an indispensable postulate of the thinking man. But when the thinking is thought out, when it has ceased to be discursive and has fulfilled itself in experience, when, as the advaitin would say, it has culminated in the intuitive realisation of the Scriptural declaration of oneness, then there is neither God nor man. These two were like the prototype and the reflection ; the reflecting medium having been realised to be unreal, there is neither prototype nor reflection, but pure intelligence alone.

It is possible to urge that God thus conceived is but a human product, a creation of human frailty and credulity, not an incontestable verity. The only answer is that there can be no truth for us which is not in this sense a human product. Truth for us lies not in a wholly super human world, but in what we experience. The test of truth lies not in relation or non-relation to human experience, but in the integrity of what claims truth. Is it a section, a part, an abstraction which we declare to be true ? Or is it the fundamental presupposition of experience, something which is concrete and a whole, in the absence of which our experience at its best (not at its weakest) fails to be intelligible ? The advaitin answers the first question in the negative and the second in the affirmative. That is his reply to the charge afore-mentioned.

IV.

Mr. Raghavendracharya's attempt to secure a dependent reality for the world merits some attention. The advaitin does not deny dependent reality to the world ; such reality, however, is for him the same as phenomenality. The illusory snake certainly exists at the time of the illusion ; it is real to that extent, since if it were unreal it would not appear at all ; and its reality is dependent on that

of the rope ; relatively speaking, the rope is independently real, while the snake is dependently real ; the former exists for some considerable time to all persons in that place, so long as they do not suffer from defective sense-organs ; the latter exists only for certain people at certain times ; the latter is sublata by the rope-cognition, while the former is sublata by Brahman cognition alone. Suppose for a moment these two were not related in this way but as the strands of the rope to the rope, or as the rope-maker to the rope ; would it still be possible to speak of the *independent* reality of ~~one~~ of the relata ? The rope is dependent on the rope-maker, but so is the rope-maker on the rope ; for, he would not be rope-maker but for the rope. In other words, if the so-called independent real is in a real relation to anything else, it is not independent ; and if the relation is not real, one at least of the relata must be phenomenal, and this is what the advaitin claims. It may be said that on the advaitin's principles both relata should be unreal ; this is a contingency of the acceptable. That is why the advaitin's Brahman is said to be supra-relational, while even *Ívara* is said to be phenomenal, since He is in the world of relations. It is meaningless to say that "the real is necessarily relative". On the contrary, what is relative cannot as such be real. The reverse has the support neither of Scripture nor of reason. And dualist attempts to torture texts can be paralleled only by Mr. Raghavendrachar's misinterpretations of the passages cited from Prof. Hiriyanna.

The Place of God in Advaita.—iii

By

A. C. MUKERJI.

A mass of conflicting opinions defying all attempts at a successful synthesis, a series of ineffectual hair-splittings leading to no definite results, mutual fault-finding, attacks and counter-attacks—these are generally supposed to sum up the nature of philosophy and indicate the function of a philosopher. However unpalatable and provocative such a characterisation may be, there is no denying the fact that the history of philosophy, either in the west or in the east, bears ample testimony to this deplorable state of philosophical thought; and, I believe, even the conception of the history of philosophy as the progressive realisation of the Absolute Truth through the relative truths of the divergent systems of thought or as the passage of the world-spirit through the different spirits of the ages, cannot wholly disarm the critics. What is this apparent fruitlessness due to? I believe there is but one answer to it. A system of philosophy, though professing to give a deeper insight into the nature of the universe by a rational sifting of existing knowledge, is frequently influenced by alogical considerations. And when extra-logical forces are allowed, either consciously, or unconsciously, to guide and incite a construction, the results are bound to be as various and conflicting as are the human prejudices and predilections. We have in that case travelled beyond the limits of philosophy into the region of the 'Idola'. And as the voice of Reason, which is the voice of the universal, is thus smothered under the weight of the 'idola', all prospects for the successful termination of an issue through mutual co-operation and understanding are bound to disappear, because the irrational 'idola' are proverbially personal and individual.

The long-drawn out dispute between the monist and the

pluralist is one of the clear cases in which the controversy has been perpetuated by the disputants stepping into the region of the 'Idola'; and the inevitable consequence is that Reason degenerated into a handmaid of the irrational, and in place of a dispassionate quest of truth, we get the sophistical pleading for a foregone conclusion. A certain amount of self created delusion is inseparable from such a procedure. And I have no doubt in my mind that such a delusion is, to a considerable extent, responsible for the dispute between Mr. Raghavendrachar and Mr. Sastri over the problem of the place of God in advaita. I call it a delusion because I find it difficult to imagine that the opposition they have created between their respective positions is in reality so strong and irreconcilable as their general procedure would lead one to surmise. In fact with a little redistribution of emphasis, the paper of Mr Raghavendrachar might easily be taken as an exposition of the views he seems anxious to criticise; and similarly, Mr. Sastri's paper requires a little re-editing in order to show that it is but a further continuation of the arguments employed by the former. To substantiate my contentions in detail would take me far beyond the limited space of this paper; yet something must be said in respect of this delusion in the sequel. Meanwhile, what I would like to make clear is that the opposition between the two positions is ultimately due to the fact that both of the writers have neglected to emphasise the fundamental character of the advaita as a spiritual discipline. I would therefore begin by removing this deficiency.

If it is assumed for the time being that the function of philosophy is to know the universe as a systematic unity, then, the aim of the advaita speculations may be said to consist essentially in bringing about a spiritual conversion of the finite into the infinite by means of knowledge or *jñānam*. The finite is here called upon to shake off its limitations and thus realise its own nature through systematic knowledge. But as

finite knowledge has its own presuppositions, the method prescribed is that of training the finite faculties of knowledge gradually through a number of definite stages, so that they may be stimulated towards what yet falls outside their scope. The advaita literature, as is well known, abounds in such expressions as the mounting of a staircase, the standpoint of ordinary experience, the viewpoint of ultimate realisation, etc. Here lies the source of the difficulties in understanding rightly the advaita position. As the reasoning has necessarily to pass through a series of tentative conclusions, each of which is valid only for a particular stage, they are sure to come into conflict with each other when the conditions under which alone they are valid are ignored or mis-stated. This I have always taken to be the right explanation of the apparent contradictions that have proved to be a stumbling block to the exponents of the advaita position. They are all due to the omission of the particular standpoints from which alone the statements are meant to be true.

The result that emerges from these considerations is that the terms truth, reality, etc., as used in the advaita philosophy, have always a reference to particular contexts, and consequently are likely to lead to confusion when they are used indiscriminately. Hence, I am inclined to believe, the key to a right estimate of the place of God in the advaita philosophy, as also of a number of fundamental problems, lies in its classification of experience into different levels of perfection, the most important of these being the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāramārthika* levels of experience. In view of the importance of this distinction, it will be useful to add here a few words of comments on their difference as well as relation.

The most fundamental characteristic of the *pāramārthika* level of experience is its transcendence of duality in all its forms. It is an experience which is so subversive of all the recognised canons of human knowledge that it has no place

for even such a generic relation as that of the experiencing subject to the experienced object. It is, therefore, aptly called an absolutely non-dual and ultra-relational experience. Here alone Reality is supposed to stand self-revealed. As thus stated, its contrast with finite experience is obvious. Finite knowledge is necessarily relational or discursive. It not only involves the subject object relation, but also those inter-objective relations that are generally called the basic conceptions of thought or categories. Thus, duality being implicit in the very structure of finite experience and finite faculties of knowledge, that which is *ex hypothesi* non-dual must be indistinguishable from a pure nothing, a mere naught that cannot stand as the subject of a significant proposition. Thus the non-dual Reality, though it is nothing less than the *ens realissimum*, is, for us, the *ens absolute indeterminatum*. How then is it possible to bridge over this great chasm between the finite and the infinite, and thus to bring about that spiritual conversion which, as we have said above, is the final aim of the advaita speculations? The answer is given in the advaita method of gradually training the finite faculties through successive stages of approximation to what is yet beyond their scope. Thus our discursive or *vṛttīyātma* knowledge suffers a gradual transmutation leading ultimately to the Absolute Experience. Here, the advaita method offers a strong contrast to the mystical method as represented, for instance, by the Yoga philosophy. As we have put the whole position elsewhere, the advaita method is not that of removing the defects of discursive knowledge by a straight leap to the mystic platform; on the contrary, a rigorous intellectual scrutiny is regarded here as an indispensable generative condition of the Absolute Experience where alone Reality stands self-revealed. Like the temporary scaffolding which has an indispensable function while the construction is not completed, the discursive knowledge prepares the path to Intuition, and

is, therefore, an important propædæutics to Absolute Experience.

The peculiarity of the advaita method, as explained here, ought to awaken us to the difficulty of a right interpretation of the fundamental vedānta tenets. The terms *asat*, *mīthya*, etc., which are the current coins of the advaita speculations, are sure to propagate confusion when they are simply translated as non-existent or unreal. Even the usual term 'phenomenal reality', though used extensively for the *vyāvahārika sūttā* has always appeared to me to be responsible for not an inconsiderable amount of mischief and misunderstanding. And the reason lies in the fact that the vadānta categories are always relative to definite stages or levels of experience, the most important of which, as suggested above, are the levels of discursive and non-discursive experience. The great chasm existing between these two types of experience ought to indicate clearly the danger of applying in the same sense the categories of reality and unreality, or of existence and non-existence, to the facts of different levels; this would be a serious misapplication of the categories beyond their legitimate sphere. If, for example, the world, in the advaita system, is condemned as *mīthyā* or non-existent, this is not equivalent to saying that the world does not exist *for us*, or that our world is a mere dream or an ordinary illusion. Such an evidently absurd position can have no place in any serious philosophy; and while this misrepresentation of the advaita system persists none can claim to have gone through even the initial baptism for understanding the profound implications of the theory of *Māyā*. The distinctions that we ordinarily make between a real thing and an illusion, or between the world of waking consciousness and that of dream, it is very important to note in this connection, are distinctions *within* finite experience; and, consequently, when an appearance is condemned as a mere illusion, it is presupposed that we are also aware of real



appearances. That is, to put it from the other side, it is only in so far as we know the nature of the real rope, that we can condemn the snake-appearance as an illusion. No philosophical thought can seriously ignore this essential correlativity of the finite categories. 64

In the light of these considerations, if we now try to ascertain the place of God in advaita, it may be easy to see that God as an omniscient and omnipotent Being possessing personality and perfections, and, as such, inspiring and satisfying religious sentiments of humanity has a genuine place in it. Such a God is as real as the individual centres of experience, or, as the world of our common experience, our moral strivings and aspirations, our happiness and misery. Neither He nor these minds and material things are mere illusions. The fact that they are absolutely non-existent from the stand-point of a higher experience does not militate against their genuine reality for our experience as it is now. A fictitious God can as little satisfy a factual religious sentiment as the unreal mirage can quench a real organic want for water. Not only this, but the vedānta method as a method of spiritual discipline would reduce itself to a sham mockery, not a serious pilgrimage, if reality were denied to those very things which form the background of the successive stages of the process. That is, if the Real is self-revealed at the final stage of Absolute Experience, such a stage cannot by any means be reached through a mere imaginary discipline; hence the reality of the higher experience implies the reality of the lower stages, quite as much as the real completed structure implies the reality of the scaffolding. God, therefore, has the fullest measure of reality in the advaita system; nay, a real God is an indispensable postulate of the advaita method of spiritual realisation.

To put this idea in a clearer form, it may be useful to contrast the *vyāvahārika sattā* of God with the conception

of phenomenal reality as the latter is usually interpreted. The distinction between appearance and reality, phenomenon and noumenon, thing as it is for us and as it is in itself, implies a genuine transformation of reality when it is made to conform itself to our faculties of knowledge. So a phenomenal reality is a distorted reality, it is the *esse in intellectu* and not the *esse in re*. It is also used in the sense of a self-discrepant reality, a fragmentary reality claiming to be a *res completa*. The *vyāvahārika* reality is neither the *esse in intellectu* which is but the transmuted or disfigured image of Reality, nor a fragmentary manifestation of that which is fuller and completer than the phenomenal reality. It is *vyāvahārika* only in the sense that it is organically connected with the finite or pre-intuitional stage of development. While the finite remains as finite, knowledge is necessarily discursive; but the fact that there is another type of experience which is not discursive does not prove that the objects of discursive knowledge are non-existent or unreal for the finite intelligence. Similarly, though God and the entire rubric of individual souls and material things, reduce themselves to absolute non-entities which could not exist either in the past or in the present or, again, in the future, yet, this is not incompatible with their fullest reality at the pre-intuitional stage of existence. It is this which the advaita system seeks to convey by its comparison of the world to a sort of cosmic illusion. The ordinary illusions show clearly how an absolutely non-existent entity can be as clearly perceived as any real thing, and how the non existence of the illusory entity can be realised only when the illusion has disappeared, but not before it. But this analogy is never meant to condemn the world as illusory *for us*.

I must now turn to what I have called above the self-created delusion born of an initial prejudice which prevents

unanimity in philosophical conclusions. It is difficult to imagine from the general trend of Mr. Raghavendrachar's analysis of the advaita position that he might be entirely ignorant of such a fundamental distinction of standpoints from which, as has been emphasised above, the vedānta thought must be interpreted. When, for instance, it is remarked that the real is necessarily relative, or that the whole universe is real, or, again, that difference is an essential aspect of everything, none but the ill-informed will take these observations to be anti-vedāntic. In fact, each of these so-called criticisms, far from exposing the defect of the advaita position, is explanatory of the well-known vedānta contention that finite knowledge is necessarily discursive. So far as the reality of the universe is concerned, this, as I have contended above, is never denied by it. The really important question is, not whether the universe is real, but whether the category of reality can be relative to a particular level of experience. But this point is not adequately accentuated by Mr. Raghavendrachar, and the consequence is that he inoculated into the advaita system a disease which does not really affect it. It will neither be possible nor profitable to discuss here all the interesting issues to which his paper refers. Whether the advaita represents a position that can be distinguished from the rival theories, such as Śūnya-vāda, Vijñāna-vāda, Prakṛtiparināma-vāda and Brahmaparināma-vāda, whether recognition implies the identity of the knower rather than of knowledge, how far the doctrine that knowledge is neither an object of itself nor of anything else amounts to the denial of knowledge, whether superimposition is possible within the pre-suppositions of the advaita system, and, last of all, if Mādhvācārya adhered to the spirit of the Upaniṣads more closely than Śaṅkarācārya,—these are some of the highly controversial issues raised by Mr. Raghavendrachar which, I think,

cannot be adequately discussed in a short paper. And it seems to me that the very fact that such a huge list of controversial topics is lightly dismissed with a cynical indifference to the arguments on the other side is strongly suggestive of the spirit of the advocate pleading before a court of justice rather than that of a philosopher before the tribunal of reason.

Mr. Sastri's paper arises out of the previous contribution by Mr. Raghavendrachar and, consequently, cannot keep itself entirely free from the contamination of the latter. While justly complaining that the Absolute should ever have been identified with God, he seems to reduce the advaita conception of God to a mere pragmatic necessity, a mere fiction which may well fulfil all the demands of a fictitious 'Jiva'. Here, again, I am inclined to believe, Mr. Sastri fails, like Mr. Raghavendrachar, to see the importance of the theory of different levels of experience which holds the key to the advaita position. A determinate God, as I have tried to emphasise above, is not a mere fiction, much less can the individual centre of experience which is the logical presupposition of every fact and fiction can be itself reduced to a fiction. If it is admitted that "God is an indispensable postulate of the thinking man", and that God and man are "like the prototype and the reflection," what follows from this admission is, not only that both the prototype and the reflection disappear with the disappearance of the reflecting medium, but also that God is real while the medium is there. There are many passages in Mr. Sastri's paper which appear to lend themselves to this interpretation, but I find it difficult to reconcile them with his conception of God as no more than a pragmatic necessity which "is real in so far as it works." This smacks too much of the subjectivistic and the sceptical tendencies of contemporary pragmatism to be of any value in a system of philosophy which seeks to indicate the path to spiritual

realisation. God, I must say at the risk of repetition, is not a fiction simply because the stage of God-realisation is transcended ; it is, on the contrary, an undeniable reality, representing a real stage in the entire process of realising the Absolute. It is true that with the realisation of the last stage of the discipline, there supervenes a radical change of attitude, and the entire universe of plurality reduces itself to a fiction, but this fact does not support the unreality or illusoriness of the universe at the pre-intuitional stage.

Mr. Sastri does not evidently think it necessary to discuss all the issues raised by the first paper, and, I believe, a full discussion of them would be impossible within the scope of a short essay. It is, however, equally difficult to enter here into a critical consideration of the new issues which he has himself raised in his own exposition. The advaita definition of the real as that which is never sublated, or as that which is neither originated nor destroyed, the description of the unreal as that which is perceived to perish in the very same locus where it was perceived, the possibility of a reality above all determinations, the question of the location of *māyā*,—these are some of the points which, again, are not less controversial than those referred to by Mr. Raghavendrachar. I shall, therefore, conclude with a reminder and a suggestion. It is well known how a great divergence of opinion exists even within the advaita school itself on the problem of the locus of *māyā* which led to a serious schism between the 'vivaraṇa' and the 'bhāmati' schools ; similarly, there is anything but unanimity amongst the advaita philosophers in regard to their conceptions of the relation between 'cit' and *māyā*, and this has considerably influenced their opinions on the nature of *Īśvara*, some regarding *Īśvara* as the pure cit reflected in the *māyā*, others considering *Īśvara* as the cit in association with *māyā* and so on. In the face of such divergence of tendencies in the

advaita school itself, it seems to me to be very risky, if not rash, to remain content with such remarks as that *māyā* belongs to and is located in the *jīva*, or that *Īśvara*, though limited by *māyā*, is the controller of *māyā*. I do not mean to suggest that such remarks may not be true; all I mean is that in view of the controversy on this head, any dogmatic assertions cannot be expected to throw much light on the advaita theory of God, particularly, in the present context. So much in the shape of reminder, I now pass on to the suggestion.

The history of the battle between Advaita and its critics has appeared to me to be mostly a history of what I have called the self-created delusion of philosophers; for, the encounter is not in reality so fierce as the battle cries would lead one to imagine. That relation and difference are inseparable from our knowledge, and consequently even the highest conceivable reality must be relational,—this has never been denied by any type of absolutism. Such a reality, as rightly contended by the critics of absolutism, must be determinate, and the relation between it and the world of multiplicity may be one of dependence. And, then, it may be urged that God being the unconditioned ground of the world, the latter has no independent existence of its own. This, I repeat, has not been totally rejected by absolutism, though the supposition that it is an entirely anti-advaita conception is mostly responsible for the protracted controversy. The really puzzling question is whether the highest reality of relational thought is in reality the highest. The puzzle has survived all attempts made, in Indian as well as western thought, for a successful solution. It is well known how Plotinus, Spinoza, Schelling and a number of British absolutists have contested the pretensions of discursive thought to reveal the highest reality, in a spirit which cannot fail to remind us of the general attitude

of the advaita thinkers of India. Now, the really vital question, as repeatedly urged by the critics of the theory of ultra-relational reality, is: how can thought criticise itself? If thought is necessarily relational, the so called ultra-relational reality must fall beyond the scope of thought, and all discussions about it must be abandoned once for all. Even to remark that it is the non-relational ground of all thinking and other relations does not remove the difficulty, because the conception of ground is itself a relational category.

Anything like a detailed consideration of this puzzle cannot be undertaken at this place. I must, therefore, content myself with a brief analysis of the position of advaita, as a mere suggestion, in relation to this ultimate problem. That Reality is ultimately ultra-relational, and consequently above all determinations, is the central thought of the advaita philosophy. At the same time, it is clearly conscious of the relational character of all thinking and of all reasoning. It follows from these two positions that the ultra-relational is inconceivable for us. Yet, logical thought, according to it, being an indispensable stage in the entire process of realising the ultra-relational Absolute, the unthinkable has to be brought under the conditions of thought by means of attributing to it what really cannot belong to it; this, as is well known, is the necessity of superimposition. The Brahman, though absolutely distinction-less is to be conceived as that to which belongs, as it were, the germ of all distinctions; and this may then be conceived as *māyā*, *śakti* or *prakṛti* of the omniscient Lord. Thus, superimposition, which is but another name for accommodation to the conditions of discursive thought, occupies a prominent place in the advaita method of stimulating thought to go beyond itself.

The status of consciousness in contemporary Realism.

By

KALI PRASAD

The University, Lucknow.

Throughout the development of modern Realism, the concept of consciousness has suffered a process of continuous attenuation. The position has been a little paradoxical, for while the reality and independence of consciousness have always been more or less systematically maintained, the concept itself has lost in content and detail. Beginning in Descartes, Locke, Reid and Hamilton with an unquestioning conviction in the reality of consciousness as a full-blooded entity or substance, one may observe the process of analysis and abstraction at work in Hume, Mach, Avenarius and James who resolve it into sensational elements constituting 'pure' experience, until we get, on the one hand, the 'neutral mosaic' of critical realists and the realism of Being of Holt and, on the other hand, Russell's 'constructs' and the realist notion of pure 'diaphaneity'.

The main motive for this disposition to repudiate or whittle down consciousness is the implicit assumption that the admission of consciousness and the mental states bound up with it eventuates in some form of subjectivism or idealism. And, most forms of realism arise as reactions to the subjectivist mode of thinking. Further, the reality and independence of the external world of objects is seriously jeopardised the moment consciousness is admitted as an entity. And finally, knowledge loses its directness and immediacy if consciousness is allowed to intervene between the objects. On these grounds Realism formulates its two important theses, viz.,

(1) Independence of Objects, and, (2) Directness of perception. The minimum that a realist would claim may be formulated in the proposition "that some entities sometimes exist without being experienced by any finite mind"¹. Now, I am not concerned in this paper with the examination of the claim embodied in the two theses. I shall primarily attempt a critical review of the development of the notion of consciousness and the vicissitudes it has suffered in the history of modern realism, and incidentally consider the part it has played in realist theories of knowledge. I shall also try to show how the confusion between the epistemic and the metaphysical and epistemic and phenomenological points of view has been mainly responsible for the growing indecision and ultimate sterility of the realistic thought of today.² In conclusion I shall make an attempt to suggest a way out of the impasse by pointing to pure phenomenology as a possible way of redemption.

Now, as we know, early realism in Descartes, Locke, and the Scottish 'philosophers of common sense' was not self-conscious. Its method is thoroughly naive and uncritical. The main problem is the explanation of 'given'. Givenness is characterised by externality and independence and as such, exists in 'its own right, i.e., independently of a knowing consciousness or subject. Like any other given the subject or consciousness is also real *per se*. The function of consciousness, if it can be said to *function* at all, is (1) to 'acquaint' us with itself and, (2) represent or image the given. It is a revelatory organ—a mirror which reflects all that falls within its focus. All the same, it is passive and does not affect the independence, that is, the reality of the given, the object. The latter far from being affected by consciousness is given as an 'instinctive belief'. Or, as Reid called it, "it is a judgment inspired by

1. Stace—"The Refutation of Realism". Mind, Vol. XLIII. p. 145.

our constitution". The problem of self-transcendence of consciousness is thus solved in terms of innate principles and instinct or belief. The device has however remained; for, some of the contemporary realists (viz Santayana) have acknowledged the problem to be ultimately insoluble save by the introduction of instinct and 'animal faith.' Thus, in their anxiety to secure independence of the object, the early realists made it so independent that it became utterly unknowable—and here too they have been followed by their modern protagonists. The only way in which it could be reflected in consciousness was by some occult power of representation. In any case, consciousness became either an impotent spectator or was itself identified with a medley of ideas. Like the Lady of Shalott it was condemned to a passionless existence among shadows and ghostly appearances.

So that, neither the independence of the object nor the directness of perception—the two fundamental theses of realism—could be vindicated by these thinkers. If independence of object appeared to be secured, at best it was a very doubtful achievement. As to the second moment of realism, viz. the immediacy and directness of perception, their failure was obvious.

Consequently, the second era in the development of realism opens with a strong protest against the doctrine of representationism and mediacy of knowledge. Immediacy and directness are considered the hall-mark of knowledge and reality. The real is presented directly. And as mind, subject, self and activity of consciousness are not thus given, they are forthwith repudiated and analysed away into sensational elements. Hume, Schuppe, Mach, Avenarius and James represent this point of view. The subjectivism and scepticism which resulted from the thought of early realists was due, says Schuppe, to their theory that subject and object are two disparate entities standing over against each other. So long

as the apprehending activity of consciousness is supposed to be a special endowment of the mind and the object is considered alien to it, the result must be scepticism. The notion of knowledge as activity has, therefore, to be discarded. Subject and object are two abstract moments which constitute being or *sein*. "It is purely arbitrary", says Schuppe, "to refuse to appearance (*sensum*) the corporeality of things and to conceive it as a mere idea which is mental and non-spatial and the opposite of the sensible and spatial'. There is no mystery in knowledge. Being in its nature is known being. This does not mean that the object is the affect or modification of the subject. The object is out there and is what it seems. It is one element of being or *sein* whose other element is subject—subject not as a separate activity but as one of the 'components' of Being

The one fatal defect in this theory is, as was pointed out by Meinong² that the independence achieved is not of the things that we are familiar with; it is on the contrary the independence of their transcendent conditions. Thus, Schuppe is falling a victim to the metaphysic of the thing-in-itself which it was his one aim to repudiate. In making consciousness a component factor of being and denying it of all activity Schuppe does not overcome the scepticism latent in subjectivist mode of thought. He is merely pushing the difficulties a step further back. Moreover, in order to make knowledge possible he brings the subject into the very heart of the object as a constituent factor in it. He could not conceive knowledge-event as a self-transcendent activity of the subject. This is like the fallacy of those who believe only in action by impact.

In Mach and James the process of analysis and attenuation reaches its completion. Things are apprehended directly and

Though whether Meinong himself escapes it is doubtful.

are independent of perception; they are constituted of *sensa*. All *sensa* are real and each *sensum* is by itself a self-subsistent reality. Ideas are of the same nature as *sensa*. They constitute the common world of the perceipients. They pass from the one I-complex to another without change. Ego or consciousness itself is nothing but a complex or mosaic of these same neutral *sensa*. "A given portion of experience" says James³, "taken in one context plays the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of consciousness, while in a different context it plays the part of a thing known, of an objective content. In one group it figures as a thought in another as a thing."

To the objection that without a conscious substratum experience will not be possible at all, Mach replies that it is a return to the old metaphysical ways of thinking, and James answers that "There is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made"⁴. "There are," says he, "as many stuffs as there are natures in things experienced." If it is asked "what any bit of pure experience is made of", the answer is always the same: "it is made of *that*, of just what appears."⁵

But while James and Mach repudiate the notion of consciousness as an entity they insist on functional relation which is a relation of simultaneity, of mutual dependence and not of sequence or causality. But relation holds where there are terms to relate. Here, obviously, there are only *body* and *object* to relate, for there is no mind or consciousness. But this cannot be, for the physiological organism and the *object* all fall within the same class, are of the same series, and a *functional* relation between them seems unmeaning. A function implies an activity and activity has already been rejected.

3. *Radical Empiricism*—"Does consciousness exist"? p. 9

4. *Ibid.* page 26.

5. *Ibid.* page 27.

Further, James's repudiation of consciousness is hardly as thorough-going as it seems. His insistence on pure *experience* lends countenance to a view toward which he indeed inclines in his later writings, viz., Pan-Psychism : a position which would not be in keeping with the claims set forth in the opening essays of Radical Empiricism.

Thus, pure experience is either resolved into those psychical states which James vigorously denied ; or it stands for a dreary, uninspiring vacuum which sucks in all the chaos of the universe. In this sense it would not be very different, from consciousness itself, looked upon by thinkers like Ladd, as a "Universal solvent, or menstruum in which the different concrete kinds of psychic acts and facts are contained whether in concealed or obvious form."⁶

Now, consciousness could not be conjured away so easily. Having once disappeared as an entity it still remained as a functional relation in Mach and James. In Twardowski, Meinong and Stout it reappears on the canvas as 'act' or 'act-quality', as Husserl has called it.

Brentano, it may be recalled, set out to discover some characteristic which would distinguish mental phenomena, or, as he called them, "psychical phenomena" from all other kinds of objects. This peculiar mark he found in what had been called intentional inexistence by the Schoolmen and what he himself proposed to call, "immanent objectivity". "Every mental state", says he, "possesses in itself something which serves as object, although not all possess their object in the same way".⁷ Mental states (whether presentations judgments, emotions, or memories) have the distinctive peculiarity of pointing toward something other than themselves. The ability to direct itself to something different is,

6. G. T. Ladd—*Psychology ; Descriptive & Explanatory*, P. 30.

7. *Psychologie von Empirischen Standpunkt II, i, 5.*

according to Brentano, altogether peculiar to mental phenomena. No purely physical phenomena could exhibit such a power.

We shall not here examine the merits of Brentano's analysis: an analysis upon which Meinong and others have relied more or less implicitly. But, it may be observed (1) that it is far from clear whether intentional inexistence or any such single distinguishing characteristic can be found or exists at all, (2) whether the definite experience of 'activity' or 'direction' is not wholly illusory like the innervation sense of the early psychologists, and, (3) if Brentano's analysis is correct "it rules out *a priori* unthinkable all those modern theories in which something analogous to mental reference is attributed to entities which are nevertheless not held to have minds".⁸ For instance, Whitehead's 'events' which are "held to enjoy uncognitive apprehensions of other events and to mirror the modes of their predecessors and successors"⁹ would be utter nonsense.

Brentano makes no distinction between the 'content' (inhalt) of a mental state and its object (Gegenstand), and Meinong who follows him likewise employs the two terms in his early days indiscriminately. This at once results in a representationistic theory of knowledge. The 'act' being directed on the content or immanent object is always removed from the transcendent or real object of which nothing can be known except perhaps that it is a cause or part of a cause of the presentation of the immanent object. The real object is known, if it all, indirectly through its effects.

Under the influence of Twardowski, Meinong came to the recognition of the distinction between content and

8. Findlay—*Meinong's Theory of Objects*, p. 6.

9. Findlay—*Meinong's Theory of Objects*, p. 6. and, Whitehead—*"Science & Modern World"* P-86.

object and discarded the image theory. According to Twardowski, both judgment and ideas direct themselves to objects which is independent of our thinking. The true object of an idea or a judgment, says he, is not the image of that object but the object itself. "But in order to pass in this way beyond ourselves to the object we have to build up within our minds an image or sign of the object to which we refer." "We require some link (Bindeglied) which will make it possible for an idea to refer to one definite object and no other."¹⁰ According to this theory the content exists in the mind and through it as an intermediary the reference to the object takes place. The *Vorstellung* or mental act or consciousness is here an instrument by means of which the object is presented. The position is not a great improvement on the image theory and Meinong has to approach the matter in a different manner.

In order to ensure immediacy and independence of knowledge it would appear Meinong develops his theory of objects, the *Gegenstand* theorie. All that is, is object. And, there are three kinds of objects, (1) those that exist, (*Sein*) (2) those that subsist, (*Bestehen*), and (3) those that neither exist nor subsist but which nevertheless are real, the *Aussersein* or *Annahemensein*, or assumptions and suppositions.

The extreme objectivism implied in this theory has been one of the most plausible solution which realist thought has offered. Realism invariably breaks down in face of the problem of illusion and error. But the *Gegenstand* theorie adopts a bold device; it looks upon the illusory and fictitious as real because, like the objects of experience, these are also (1) objects and (2) independent of the mind. We fail to see this because we have an obstinate and a deep-rooted prejudice in favour of the real. The same

¹⁰ Findlay; *ibid.* p. 9.

logical and physical principles, however, which govern the real are exemplified in the so-called unreal or fanciful. The act or act-quality is the same in all objects. But an act does not refer as one might expect to a *whole* of experience, e. g., judging that virtue is good or desiring success in a venture etc. Meinong on the other hand means by an act a certain component or quality, an element in an experience which 'exhibits a variability independent of the reference to a given object'.¹¹ So defined, the act involved in an idea is the function of presenting which is common to all ideas. It is a "qualitative moment in a complete experience, the way in which the mind directs herself to an object",¹² rather than the complete experience itself

Thus, the act element does not affect the object, for it might be altered while the object remains unaltered. Meinong's instance of this is "the way in which the hearing of a tone passes over into an imaginative reproduction: the act alters, the experience changes in quality, but the same object is presented".¹³ This is more evident in case of objects called propositions which we may believe to be true, or "assume" or merely guess their truth with varying degrees of certainty. The attitudes differ while the object in each case remains the same. The act-element is that moment in our experience which changes in a wholly subjective way and which by itself does not present anything.

The act is neither a function nor an instrument though, it has a peculiar property of being *directed* toward objects. This peculiar direction is an inexplicable mystery, and Meinong has not thrown any light on it. There, however, appear to be two statements which are intended as explana-

11. Findlay—ibid. p. 25.

12. „ ibid. p. 25.

13. „ ibid. p. 25.

tions, viz., (1) that an idea or *Vorstellung* directly involves consciousness of its object, and (2) awareness of an appearance or property directly involves consciousness of the thing or substance. Both these are strongly suggestive of the causal view, a view, however, which Meinong, in common with other realists, repudiates. In (1) cause-effect category appears in so far as the *sensa* are supposed to be the effects of the object, and in (2) it is implied in the substance quality relation. It will be evident that the explanation of the direction comes from the objective pole, as it were: the object implicates or involves itself in the act which somehow is directed towards it. This is inevitable, for in Meinong's realism all that is is an object—the act consequently is a component or element in the midst of other elements or objects. If Meinong still appears to distinguish between the act and the object it is because he is under the dominance of Brentano and the Act School.

The logical step in this direction is consciously taken in Holt, Perry and Russell, and the naturalistic realists. Like Meinong, Holt, too, recognises a complex and heterogenous realm of objects, a universe of *mere* being. "The picture which I wish to leave", says Holt,¹⁴ "is of a general universe of being in which all things, physical, mental, logical, propositions and terms, existent and non-existent, false and true, good and evil, real and unreal subsist". The various entities are in themselves neutral or, as Meinong would say, "have an indifference to being". They are independent of consciousness, for consciousness, if it exists, is itself such an entity. "A mind or consciousness", Holt says,¹⁵ "is a class or group of entities within the subsisting universe, as a physical object is another class or group". The conscious or the I-complex

14. *New Realism*—p. 372.

15. *ibid.* p. 373.

is composed of many factors and holds in solution, as it were, many component neutral elements which might equally well belong elsewhere. "One entity or complex of entities", according to Holt, "can belong to two or more classes or groups at the same time, as one point can be at the intersection of two or more lines, so that an entity can be an integral part of a physical object, of a mathematical manifold, and one or any number of consciousnesses at the same time".¹⁶ Consciousness is a 'cross-section' cut off from the environment by the selective responses of the organism. It is otherwise expressed as an aggregate of objects or a class of classes. As the place of a physical object is defined within the subsistent world in terms of principles known to science, in the same way 'the class of consciousnesses is defined within the universe by principles which are partly known,'¹⁷ and may be more fully known by psychology. Thus, there is no greater incomprehensibility inherent in the concept of consciousness than any other physical entity. The question, how and why consciousness can know or be directed toward an object is entirely misleading for it already implies a theory, i.e., the 'bifurcation of nature' in Whitehead's expressive phrase. It is propounded on the untenable assumption of disjunction and dualism. Even if it is allowed there is no more and no less mystery in the so-called direction of the mind than there would be, for instance, in the question why one molecule is attracted or repelled by another. And just as there will be a definite scientific answer to the one so there will be to the other.

Naturalistic realism has been still more drastic in its conclusions. It is not disposed to look upon consciousness even as a cross section or a class of aggregates or a system of objects. Under the influence of biological sciences

16. *New Realism*—p. 373.

17. *ibid.*, p. "

it has adopted a frankly behaviouristic outlook. According to its theory, consciousness is merely a response of the nervous organism. It would be "a complex combination of reflexes". The so-called mental phenomena are all either quantifiable physiological processes or nothing at all. Knowledge on this hypothesis would be a certain reaction of the nervous tissue and meaning would be mere kinesthesia or twitches in the viscera.

In view of this to suggest that mind has certain peculiar characteristics whereby it cannot be an object to itself and that it "enjoys" its experience of knowledge as Alexander holds would be considered to be the most outrageous betrayal of the most fundamental principles of realism. Instead of admitting the ultimate identity of the act and the object (the content is constituted by the actual bodily presence of the known object), the central thesis of New Realism, Alexander holds them separate. The act, however, "is not an act of something but an ultimate entity; and so for him consciousness as *knowing* is not a relation, but a subjective entity of a sort, ultimate and indefinable".¹⁸ But though there is no relation in the ordinary sense there is a new relationship between the act and the content—the relationship of 'compresence'.

Now it will be evident that a compresence is no specific relation at all. Mere togetherness does not describe a relation, it rather implies the want of a relation. Further, the abstract contentless act which can be enjoyed or contemplated but not understood shows relapse into the metaphysics of the unknowable and all the mysteries connected therewith. It further shows how difficult it must be "to make plain the relationship between a diaphanous and indefinable fact, and an abstract quality—a relation with the peculiarity that one term is nothing but the awareness of the other."¹⁹ Having

18. A. K. Rogers—*Recent Theories of Consciousness*. Mind, XXIX. p. 297.

19. Ibid. p. 299 also, Russell, Mind XIII p. 510.

once reduced it to a condition of pure diaphaneity, Alexander perhaps would have been more logical to deny it or to treat it as a physical or mental existent among others, as the new realists have done. In any case, to assign it a privileged position in the realm of objects is to create insurmountable epistemological difficulties.

To sum up the position thus far we have seen how new realism in its attempt to maintain on the one hand the reality that is the independence of consciousness or the mental subsistent and on the other to deny any efficacy or substantiality or even activity to it has resulted in a very puzzling situation. If it has maintained the reality of all *sensa* or objects it has sacrificed the reality of the mental, and the problem of illusion and error has been impossible to solve. If it has maintained the reality of both the mental and the physical it has had to invent an intermediary (an idea, e. g.) to bring them together, and has resulted in representationism and scepticism. This is no less true of the old and naive realism than of the new and critical realism. In view of this some have maintained the neutral monism of being or of the universals (e. g., Holt), or the monism of neutral particulars (e. g., Russell) or, the theory of *esseces* (e. g. Santayana). In the earlier views consciousness was taken as an instrument of revelation or discovery; even though an instrument which *did* nothing. This "searchlight theory" as Bosanquet²⁰ has called it, was given up and the view of consciousness as a relation of particulars or a set of facts or 'event-particles' came to be adopted. In the latter case, however, consciousness lost all that was distinctive: viz., subjectivity, activity, purposefulness, meaning etc. It became an object in the midst of other objects, or a pale contentless universal lacking in colour and concreteness.

²⁰ Bosanquet—*Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*; p. 20.

The result, though uninspiring, has nevertheless been logical. If it has not been acceptable it is not because consciousness is too precious a possession to lose but because the logical rigor in the heretics has not been unmixed with non-logical motives.

One great source of misgiving among the realists has been the horror of what Bosanquet has described "the contamination of nature by mind". This dread springs from the assumption that mind and nature are two distinct terms and that knowledge is some function of the two. Even where as in new realism the two terms are depressed into neutral entity or entities, the production of knowledge remains as inexplicable as on the earlier hypothesis. For, instead of having to relate two terms, now one has to explain the coming together in an epistemic situation of a multitude of independent neutral elements. The theory of universals and essences is a device for explaining the rationale and inner necessity implied in the knowledge-event. But the difficulty is that here the strictly empirical and epistemological view-point is given up. For, the universal or essence is now erected into a metaphysical principle invented for regulating and rendering knowledge, possible. Like James's pure experience, Holt's universal being appears to hold within it, in spite of disclaimers to the contrary, the active principle of knowledge. It is in virtue of this that *sensa mean* knowledge or give rise to the peculiar epistemic situation. The universal being bears a striking resemblance to the "pure being" of Parmenides, and like the latter cannot be understood except as a metaphysical category. In the same way the essences of which Santayana talks are like ideas in certain Platonic systems of thought *

* Except perhaps they lack the logical rigor which throughout characterises Platonic realism.

and are equally transcendental in character. Ultimately then the realist thesis of a separation of epistemology from metaphysics has not been justified. Indeed, but for the intrusion of metaphysics and its categories the realist theory of knowledge would hardly get under way.

Now, if we exclude metaphysics we do exclude it. A theory of knowledge may not lean upon a theory of reality; if it is to be really independent it must be based upon phenomenological data. From this point of view experience presents none of the abstract characters which customary language has enshrined in categories like mind, object, thing, etc.. And new realism has proceeded phenomenologically when it has discarded subject, consciousness, activity, causality etc., but it has not been thorough. It still accepts the notion of a general being. In this respect Russell has shown far greater insight. In the development of his thought, the object falls first, then the subject, and finally the act itself. Phenomenological reflection must be prepared to forego all that immediate experience does not guarantee.

By adopting an attitude of systematic "suspension" or "bracketing" as Husserl has pointed out, we find that experience is a certain peculiar flow in which there are stresses and strains but no halting places and rest-grooves. It is a "fluid" field (like an electro-magnetic field) in which no isolated quality like consciousness or object can be singled out except perhaps by an effort of abstraction. Says Whitehead, "The object cannot really be separated from its field. The object is in fact nothing else than the systematically adjusted set of modifications of the field. The conventional limitation of the object to the focal stream of events in which it is said to be situated is convenient for some purposes but it obscures the fact of nature".²¹ Experi-

21. *Concept of Nature*, p. 190.

ence as it is, comes upon us with an urgency and inevitability all its own. There is no causal effort which brings the various moments together.

In this way knowledge would be self-revelation of the object—though not perhaps a *necessary* self-revelation as Bosanquet and the idealists would have us believe. Knowledge-event is a living concrete phenomenon and to ask why it should arise in certain situations implies the investigation of the operative conditions in detail. Generally to describe these conditions is to describe the knowledge-event itself. Phenomenologically, the knowledge-event is prior to its conditions. It is not however, a mysterious emergence of a quality for it has been experienced in its uniqueness and familiarity right from the beginning. Strictly, there is hardly a beginning for a knowledge-event: it is 'like instant or point of the physicist though not abstract. It represents a whole situation, a 'gestalt' with its own proper principles and laws. The knowledge situation is no straightforward relation and no specific characters can be determined *a priori* in terms of abstract logical categories. The principles and laws which govern the knowledge-event like any other situation may be discovered by an adequate empirical and psychological inspection. In this sense psychology and the physical sciences and not logic would be basic to epistemology.

* Looked at in this way, consciousness may be regarded as a construction from the data of experience. It is a construction, however, in which consciousness represents no single unity but exemplifies a situation, or an event where many factors are in indissoluble partnership. The object as one aggregate of phenomena is inseparably involved in the conscious situation which is a name for another class of events. It is not a concept, nor an inference nor even an 'implication'. It is a construction, but not in the

sense of a fiction as Stace thinks,²² for it is grounded in the given. But a construction is not to be treated as a product of deliberate and consciously motivated effort. We do not set about to construct. Constructions arise spontaneously in the course of experience. If there were a 'fossil mind' (in more than a mere metaphorical sense) it should already exhibit certain well-marked constructs in its possession. The question of the reality and unreality of a construct is irrelevant in itself; for, the reality or otherwise of a construct is determined by the system in which it is used and for which it may be of value. Thus, whether consciousness be real or no, whether it has certain attributes of activity, unity etc., are questions which epistemology need not answer. They will be of value to the metaphysician only. Phenomenologically directed epistemology has no concern with them. Phenomenology has to do with what might be called pure data and not with spurious ones. Consciousness as a self, substance, causal instrument or activity is an hypothesis and an 'assumption' based on certain experiences which in themselves may or may not justify it. When, however, these categories are taken as built upon facts or even as representing them they become dangerously spurious data. Our quarrel with the new realist is just this that he has introduced some of these spurious concepts (like Being, Pure Experience, Essence, etc., all with capitals! without knowing that they militate against his whole empirical outlook and render his attempts toward a phenomenology abortive.

— — — — —

22. Stace : *Theory of knowledge and Existence*. p. 168.

The Status of Consciousness in Contemporary Realism.

By

B. N. Roy.

In his paper Mr. Kali Prasad has tried to give, in the first place, a critical review of the notion of consciousness, and the vicissitudes it has suffered in the history of modern realism, and in the second place, he has indicated the role which consciousness has played in the realistic theories of knowledge. After discussing the realistic theories from these two standpoints he concludes that they are characterised by 'utter sterility' and a 'growing indecision', and a way out of this impasse can be found only by resorting to the phenomenological view-point of Husserl. My own study of contemporary realism, is mainly confined to the views of the British and the American realists, and it has led me to think that the attempts of the realists to formulate a theory of consciousness are not without elements of value. The changes which the notion of consciousness have suffered in their hands are neither sudden nor inexplicable. They have subjected the traditional notion of consciousness as a substance to a searching criticism, and the way in which they have analysed the concept has led to the annulment of the dualistic hypothesis. Consciousness is no longer conceived of as an entity absolutely separated from the rest of existence. It has been brought into a line with other objects of nature from which it does not differ in stuff, but only in respect of its quality.

In the present paper I, therefore, propose to show firstly, that the changes which the concept of consciousness have suffered in the hands of the realists are to be explained as more or less inevitable, and secondly, to discuss the subject with special reference to the views of representative British and American realists with a view to adding some more

information about the subject to that which has been already supplied.

It is true indeed, as Mr. Kali Prasad asserts, that 'throughout the development of modern realism the concept of consciousness has suffered a continuous attenuation'. From the substance conception of consciousness, as held by Locke and Descartes, to the cross-section theory of Holt, the changes which the concept has undergone have been remarkable indeed. But this radical transformation is neither sudden nor inexplicable; it has been brought about by a complete change in the outlook of philosophy and in the method to be pursued by it. This change is explained as mainly due to the rapid progress in the domain of natural science as also to the researches in the fields of physiological and animal psychology. The modern physicist's investigation into the constitution of matter has revealed that its constituents are not to be conceived of in the analogy of microscopic tennis balls as inert static entities; rather they are to be regarded as units of electrical energy and as such essentially dynamical. Thus the character of matter has been rendered less material. In the realm of psychology, again, there has been an attempt to understand consciousness without assuming anything which is not open to external observation. This method has been applied by a certain school of psychologists to the study of human behaviour, in view of its success in the field of animal psychology. Careful observers of animals have gradually discovered that they can give a more reliable account of the actions of animals without assuming anything like what we call consciousness. The objective method has been mainly instrumental in placing animal psychology on a truly scientific basis. The success of the animal psychologist has led the behaviourists to introduce objective method in the sphere of human psychology, and as a result of this we find them dis-

carding the notion of consciousness altogether and resorting to behaviour as the proper object of psychological study.

The realist found himself in the midst of a situation which was perplexing to a degree. He could not ignore the new developments which were taking place in the domains of physics and psychology, resulting in the breakdown of the traditional dualism and in the removal of the barrier which had hitherto kept the two sciences apart. In view of these new developments he felt the necessity for reorientation of the whole field of philosophy. The idealist sought to build the conception of reality on apriori logic. Following the demands of such logic, he conceived reality as a coherent whole. The conception is indeed satisfying to thought, but it fails to explain certain features of reality, such as, time, change, plurality, etc, which exist as facts for our experience. These features could not be put into the crucible of logic without doing violence to their nature. These considerations have led to the abandonment of the apriori method. The realists have sought to introduce the scientific or empirical method in the domain of philosophy. Philosophy differs from science not so much in its method as in its subject matter. In spirit the philosophical method is the same as the scientific method. The scientist employs the method of analysis and description and resorts to hypothesis to bring its data into verifiable connection. The philosopher also does the same thing. The difference lies only in respect of subject matter. The scientist is concerned only with the particular features or aspects of experience, while the philosopher deals with its more comprehensive aspects. The philosopher must face the facts as the scientists do with an absolutely open mind. He must study them as they really are, and not as he wishes them to be.

One important effect of the introduction of empirical method in philosophy has been to treat finite mind as one among

many forms of finite existence. "Minds are indeed," as Alexander says, "the most gifted members in a democracy of things, but in respect of reality, all existences are on an equal footing". Mind does not occupy any central position in the scheme of reality, and as such it does not affect or determine the character of reality. This being the status of mind in the scheme of things, the science of knowing becomes independent of the science of reality.

These preliminary observations as regards the change in outlook and method of the contemporary realists will enable us to realise why the conception of consciousness has undergone such transformation in their hands. The realist, following the empirical method, formulates a certain hypothesis concerning the nature of consciousness and tests its validity by bringing it into relation with facts which it is supposed to explain. In the present connection the function of consciousness is exhibited particularly in the domain of knowledge and we have to see whether the theory of consciousness formulated by the realist adequately explains the nature of knowledge. If we wish to be fair in our criticisms of the realistic theory, the only way to deal with it is to test its adequacy by bringing it into relation with the facts which it is supposed to explain.

As has already been pointed out by Mr. Kali Prasad, the traditional conception of consciousness as a spiritual entity was vigorously challenged by W. James. In denying, however, the spiritual and entitative character of consciousness, he did not intend to deny its existence. What he really wanted to deny was the conception of consciousness as being endowed with some peculiar stuff or quality of being. He does not find any evidence either theoretical or empirical for believing in the existence of an entity such as the self-conscious spiritual subject or the 'I think'. Introspection fails to reveal anything like spiritual or conscious activity,

and in trying to introspect, what one 'feels distinctly' is some 'bodily process', for the most part taking place within the head. The only activity that one is capable of discovering is composed of sensations of bodily exertion and strain, or of feelings of "the tendency, the obstacle, the will, the strain, the triumph or the passive giving up." From these James concludes "that our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked." (*Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 376, 380; *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp 300, 301-302). Thus for James conscious activity is identical with the feeling of bodily activity. As regards the nature of consciousness, the contention of James is that it is not endowed with any peculiar quality of being or any peculiar substantial character. The primal stuff of the world is pure Experience, and consciousness is explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which the portions of pure experience may enter. A given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, plays the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of consciousness, while in a different context, the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective content. And since it can figure in both groups simultaneously we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective both at once. (*Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp, 9-10). Hence James denies the entitative and spiritual character of consciousness and regards it as a functional relation. That the formulation of such a theory of consciousness was not due to any mental perversity or inherent bias against the traditional conception becomes manifest to us if we remember that James was largely influenced in the formulation of his theory by the investigations he carried on in the field of psychology. The characteristic of the contemporary realism as distinguished from tradi-

tional idealism lies in the fact that the former in its solution of philosophical problems relies more upon the conclusions of science than upon apriori logic. If we bear in mind this fact, then the change which the concept of consciousness has suffered in contemporary realism will appear to us as inevitable, and not sudden or inexplicable.

The American Realists were profoundly influenced by the speculations of William James. His theory of Pure Experience gave rise to the doctrine of neutral entities, and his theory of the identity of conscious activity with the feeling of bodily activity was carried a step further in a frank adoption of behaviouristic attitude. Consciousness is no longer a spiritual entity or substance, but is the interested behaviour of the organism in relation to certain aspects of the environment, as Perry holds, or a cross-section of the environment defined by the specific response for the behaviour of the conscious organism, as defined by Holt. According to Holt 'behaviour' or 'specific response' is an emergent quality which appears in the nervous organism at a certain stage of its evolution. An organism endowed with this quality exhibits certain features and performs certain functions which are absent in the organisms of a lower level in the evolutionary process. Mere reflex action which characterises lower organisms, and which is largely conditioned by immediate stimuli, can not be identified with behaviour or specific response, which in a large measure performs functions independently of immediate stimuli and bears as its essential mark a genuine objective reference. But behaviour or specific response alone is not consciousness; It is only one term of the whole situation which constitutes consciousness. Specific response is essential, but in itself, it does not constitute consciousness. By "cross-section" Holt understands 'any part collection that is defined by a law which is unrelated (or but remotely related) to the laws that define

the whole in question". (*Concept of Consciousness*, p. 170). These part collections or cross-sections may be defined in an infinite number of ways. But when we have a collection of objects or a cross-section of the universe defined by the specific response of the organism then there is consciousness. This is due to the fact that specific response is "a striking novelty which does not occur anywhere in the evolutionary series prior to the appearance of organised response" (*Freudian Wish*, p. 167). Hence Holt maintains that the criterion of consciousness is specific response and Psychology is the science of Psychic cross-section. (*Concept of Consciousness*, pp. 205-206). The entire cross-section or collection of objects defined by the specific response of the nervous system is assumed to constitute mind or the psychic realm, and the individual members of this cross-section are, taken severally, the various contents of consciousness, such as sensa, percepts and ideas. Sensa and percepts are "objects in the hierarchy of being, and they are in the psychic cross-section when the nervous system specifically responds to them". (*Concept of Consciousness*, p. 219) Holt thus repudiates the contention of the representationist that the content and the object are existentially distinct, and maintains, on the other hand, that they are numerically identical entities. Sensa and percepts are not mental representations, but are integral parts selected from the objects by the specific response of the nervous system. Sensa and percepts, depend for their reality as contents of consciousness, strictly on the physical organism or the nervous system. (*Concept of Consciousness*, p. 208). But they "are something in themselves also aside from that which conditions them". (*ibid*, p. 209). It is true that the conscious cross-section is defined by the specific response of the nervous system, and thus several entities which belong to it constitute a new relational manifold, and by virtue of such relation assume the

status of conscious contents. But the several components of psychic cross section subsist even independently of such specific relation. In whatsoever context these entities may be, they still retain their distinct self-identity. Neither the elements nor their combinations are made by the mind, for they are strictly independent entities to which knowing makes no difference. Experience does not make any difference to facts, be those logical concepts, sensa, percepts, images or feelings. It thus appears that Holt, as against representationism, seeks to vindicate the two most important features of the realistic theory of cognition, viz., directness of perception and independence of objects. But in his anxiety to do so he runs into extreme objectivism and annuls altogether the distinction between the subjective and the objective.

The extreme objectivist character of Holt's theory of consciousness is largely due to his ontological theory of neutral being. The realistic universe which Holt describes is neither mental nor material, but strictly neutral in character, and the various entities which constitute it "are of the class of mathematical and logical concepts" (*Concept of Consciousness*, p. 136). The Ultimate entities are neutral in character and the category of being alone can be attributed to them. The world represents a realm of neutral entities, graded in a strict and inalienable order of complexities. Beginning with certain relatively simple entities where analysis terminates, it is possible to frame a deductive system in which the development, is an asymmetrical transition, from simple fundamental, abstract entities to entities complex, particular and concrete. The possibility of such a deductive system rests upon the theory that the propositions are active and can generate of their own motion further terms and propositions. (*Concept of Consciousness*, p. 16). It is maintained that the funda-

mental logical propositions have intrinsic activity and generative power, and this being granted, it becomes possible to exhibit the order of advance in the deductive system wherein the neutral entities are graded in an asymmetrical order of simple-to-complex hierarchy. In this rigidly deductive system there is no gap anywhere. The transitions from mathematical concepts to space, from space to matter, from matter to life, from life to consciousness, and from consciousness to the realm of values are marked by an unbroken continuity. The different orders of being in the complexity series are not substantially distinct from one another, and even when consciousness appears there is absolutely no break in the series. Consciousness is not a simple substance and can be readily and completely defined in terms of the entities that have appeared before. It is ultimately neutral in character, and has its place in the realm of neutral being as an object among other objects. Consciousness as a cross-section of the universe is as much an object as any other physical entity. The neutral ontology of Holt has led to formulate the objective theory of consciousness.

The neutral monism of Holt has undoubtedly been influenced by James's theory of Pure Experience. Further, James's denial of the entitative character of consciousness, and the dualism of the content and the object, and his assertion of the identity of the feeling of the bodily action with conscious activity paved the way for Holt's cross section theory of consciousness. As regards Holt's theory of neutral being it may be compared to the Spinozistic conception of substance which is neither material nor mental. The logico-mathematical neutral entities from which consciousness is sought to be deduced are the simples where analysis terminates, and no quality can be attributed to them except the quality of being. Such a conception has been reached

by carrying the process of logical abstraction and analysis to its utmost limit, and the result has been the elimination of concrete differences. Such a neutral being is by its very nature unknown and unknowable, since it is absolutely predicateless and thus utterly incomprehensible by thought. The concrete, empirical world with its qualitative features is dissolved into a plurality of entities, characterless, abstract and non-temporal. The entities of the neutral realm are, as logical concepts, evidently universal, devoid of all sensuous and qualitative character pertaining to our temporal experience. How is it possible to deduce from these abstract, non-temporal and logical universals the concrete, temporal and particular existents of the empirical world? Holt fails to account for this transition from the universal and non-temporal to the particular and temporal. How is it possible to deduce consciousness from these bare abstract neutral entities?

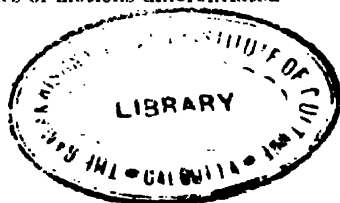
As has already been pointed out, it is the neutral ontology of Holt which has given rise to the objective cross-section theory of consciousness. The cross-section theory implies that consciousness is a transaction between a neural organism and an independent environment defined by the specific response of such organism. In the conscious situation the nervous system selects by specific response certain elements from the physical universe, which constitute the contents of consciousness. The whole transaction here is a wholly physical affair. If certain elements are selected from the physical universe, and if selection is the work of the nervous system which is likewise physical, then the final result must also be physical and nothing more. The result is not altered in any way by calling it mind or consciousness; for it remains at the end what it was at the beginning, namely, physical. If we hold that the response necessary for consciousness is of the same nature as the objects which it selects, and exists alongside of them, is it possible to explain any awareness of object? Prof. Alexander, in cri-

ticising the cross section theory of Holt, points out that the response must be clearly distinct from the objects responded to, and in responding we should be aware of the fact that we are responding. In the words of Prof. Alexander it may be said that "whenever we know, we know that we know, or that knowing and knowing that we know are one and the same thing." (S. T. D., Vol. II., p. 112) This implies that in any cognitive situation the ultimate reference to the self is essential—without such reference no consciousness or knowledge is possible. The self in the present case cannot be the body or the physical organism, because the body is not conscious. (ibid. p. 113). We are therefore, compelled to admit the existence of a correlative responsive reaction which underlies the nervous processes, but which itself is non-physical. This non-physical or mental reaction is the response of the self.

Again, the extreme objectivism implied in Holt's theory has been the result of the doctrine of neutral being. The theory of neutralism has led to the definition of consciousness as a cross section or a class of objects among other objects, and has resulted in the obliteration of the distinction between the subjective and the objective. As a direct consequence of such a view errors and illusions have come to be regarded as objective and subsisting in a neutral universe with the real. If error and illusion have a place in the realm of neutral being side by side with the real and the veridical, by what criterion are we to distinguish between them? The neutral organism responds equally to the real and the unreal object; but how is it possible for one to become aware of their distinction? Representationism accounted for this distinction by the hypothesis of a mental content forming the *tertium quid* between the mental act and the real object. But it led to subjectivism and ultimately to phenomenalism, rendering all knowledge of the real object impossible. In his anxiety to reject representationism and to avoid the consequences which such theory implies,

Holt has gone to the opposite extreme, and with the denial of the content has denied the subjective altogether. Thus the extreme objectivism of Holt has broken down in the face of the problem of illusion and error. The recognition of the vital distinction between the subjective and the objective, the distinction between the mental act and the real object, is essential for a satisfactory explanation not only of the problem of knowledge, but also of the problem of illusion and error. In this respect the theory of consciousness formulated by Prof. Alexander seems to me to be more satisfactory.

Mr. Kali Prasad has dismissed rather summarily the views of Prof. Alexander. The criticisms* which he has levelled against his theory seem to be unjustified. The views of Alexander deserve more serious consideration than what Mr. Kali Prasad has bestowed upon them. For a proper appreciation of Alexander's theory of consciousness it is necessary to understand his ontological position. Alexander rejects the neutralism of Holt and does not seek to deduce consciousness from a few simple and indefinable logico-mathematical entities. So he is not faced with the difficulty which confronted Holt, namely, of explaining the transition from the universal and non-temporal to the particular and temporal. For him the basic stuff of the world is Space-Time, which is absolutely simple and does not possess any other quality of motion. The logico-mathematical entities, he contends, are not simple or ultimate, but on analysis are found to be complexes of Space-Time. Identity, Number and Difference, and the various categories are found to have a spatio-temporal structure. So for him there is no bifurcation of the realm of being into universal and particular, into temporal and non-temporal. Space-Time is an infinite given whole, and its elements are represented conceptually as point instants, or bare events. Existents are configurations of such events, crystals in that matrix. They are complexes of motions differentiated



within the all-embracing and all-compassing system of motion. Empirical existents possess two kinds of qualities, namely pervasive and variable, belonging respectively to categories and qualities. Categories emerge out of the elementary conditions of Space-Time which possess no quality except the Spatio-temporal quality of motion. Empirical things come into existence, because Space-Time of its own nature breaks up into finites. The qualities arising out of the motion of Space-Time stand to each other in a progressive temporal relation; they emerge in orders or levels and form a hierarchy, the quality of each level of existence being identical with a certain complexity or collocation of elements on the next lower level. The emergence of a new quality from any level of existence means that at that level there comes into being a certain collocation of the motions belonging to that level, and possessing the quality appropriate to it, and this collocation possesses a new quality distinctive of the higher complex. The higher emergent is based on a complexity of the lower existents. Thus physical and chemical processes of a certain complexity have the new quality of life; therefore, life is at once physico-chemical process, but is not merely physical and chemical. And higher than the living thing with its quality of life is mind, that collocation of motions endowed not only with the physical and chemical qualities, but also with consciousness, the last and the highest of the empirical qualities known to us. Now, mind as the highest empirical existent possesses the unique quality of consciousness. Alexander contends that while mental process is neural it is not merely neural, and that the mental process is not merely physiological, but also mental. Mental process being in the same place and time with the neural process, we are forced to go beyond mere correlation of the mental with the neural process and assert their oneness and identity. His contention is that consciousness is a quality which emerges

in the neural process when it has assumed a specific complexity in the course of evolution. There are not two processes, one neural and the other conscious or mental. When the neural process is apprehended from outside, from the standpoint of the external spectator, it appears as non-mental; but the same neural process, when enjoyed from within appears to possess the characteristic mental quality.

In stressing the distinction between enjoyment and contemplation as basal elements of conscious experience, Prof. Alexander clearly affirms his difference from the objectivistic conception of consciousness formulated by Holt. Consciousness according to him is not the 'cross-section' of the environment defined by the searchlight of response, it is the searchlight itself; it is within the responsive organism, and not 'out there' in the objective environment. The empirical method followed by Alexander precludes him from assigning any privileged position to mind in the scheme of reality. In respect of reality mind is exactly on the same level as the other finite existents, and its difference from the latter consists simply in the measure of perfection it has attained, being the last and the highest empirical quality that we know. The distinctive emergent quality which mind possesses cannot be experienced if it is apprehended from outside. It can be experienced or enjoyed from within. Alexander distinguishes two different modes of knowing, namely, enjoyment and contemplation. Mind is essentially activity, and this activity can be enjoyed by us in contemplating a non-mental object. In any conscious experience these two existences (the mental act and the non-mental object) are connected together by the relation of compresence, yet the two terms of the total experience are apprehended in different ways. The one is experienced, that is is present in the experience, as the act of experiencing; the other as that which is experienced. The one is an 'ing', the other an "ed". In

my experience, the mind in contemplating its object enjoys itself, and these two existences, the act of the mind and the object as they are in the experience, are distinct existences united by the relation of compresence. The object contemplated is always a non-mental one, while the enjoyed experience is always mental.

The act of mind is never found by itself as a single existent. At any moment a special mental act is continuously united with other mental acts within the one total or unitary condition. Moreover, "not only is the mental act continuous with others at the same moment, but each moment of mind is continuous "with preceding, remembered moments and with expected ones. The continuum of mental acts, continuous at each moment, and continuous from moment to moment is the mind as we experience it". (*S. T. D.* p. 14, Vol. I). Mind, thus, is the enjoyed synthesis of many mental acts, a synthesis we do not create, but find. (*ibid.* p. 14) It is the substantial continuum of mental processes which have conscious quality. (*ibid.* Vol. II p. 81). Not only is the particular mental act enjoyed, but the whole mind, as the substantial continuum of several mental acts, is also enjoyed. In the same way, the thing is the synthesis of its many appearances which are contemplated by the mind. The synthesis of the appearances is not the work of the mind, but is objective and belongs to things themselves.

According to Alexander, mental activity is conation, and the conative side of experience is the only thing which is mental. There is nothing in the mind but acts, and the term 'act' does not imply any special form of mental activity, such as desire, or willing, but is equivalent to what we understand by the term 'process' and as such includes passive acts of sense as well as activities of volition. The term conation used in an extended sense includes all mental acts, active as well as passive. Cognition is neither a separate kind of action

from conation, nor is it a separate element in a mental act which is distinguishable from the conative element in the act; it is nothing but the conation itself in so far as it is compressed with and refers to an object. Our perception of the object means our behaviour in a certain manner towards the object we perceive. In so far as the conative act refers to its object it is a cognition.

Consciousness is identical with conation and it is essentially mental activity. It occupies time and occurs in time and moreover it has direction and its direction varies with the physical object to which the activity is related. Besides these features it possesses different degrees of intensity and is variably toned with pleasure and pain and emotional excitement. Apart from these affective modifications, consciousness is without quality, except the quality of being consciousness. The only difference which characterises consciousness is the difference of direction. With the variation of the object the response or reaction also varies. According to the quality, the complexity, the grade of the object (as *sensum* or as *perceptum*), the mental quality varies in direction. Thus while the direction of consciousness changes with the variation of the object to which it is related, consciousness itself retains the same quality. It has no difference of quality to correspond with the difference of its objects. Again, Alexander clearly distinguishes mental action or consciousness from motor processes. Although consciousness always finds expression in such motor reactions as bodily movements, gestures, words and the like, yet it should be distinguished therefrom, because these motor reactions are themselves *sensa*, and physical processes of the body merely. They are part of the object of mind, but they are not mind itself. Thus Alexander clearly and unequivocally affirms his difference from the behaviourists. For him consciousness cannot be identified with the bodily

behaviour, since the latter can be an object of consciousness, but consciousness can never be an object to itself.

His difference from the behaviouristic standpoint is most clearly brought out by his defence of introspection which the latter rejects as altogether useless as a method of psychology. It should be noted, however, that Alexander does not accept the traditional notion of introspection. He does not regard introspection as a self-objectifying process. It does not give us any knowledge of *sensa*, percepts or images, but can make possible only the experience of mental acts, such as sensing, perceiving, imagining, remembering, etc.. *Sensa*, percepts, etc. are rather objects of extraspection. Introspection only enables us to report more distinctly the condition of our enjoyment. For psychological purposes it means simply the enjoyment lived through with a scientific interest. Introspection is thus to be distinguished from ordinary enjoyment in the sense that it is enjoyment lived through with a definite purpose in view and thus makes us more clearly aware of the nature of mental act than it is possible in ordinary enjoyment.

• It appears from the foregoing that if we are to have knowledge of the self, we can not have it by converting it into an object. Self can be given only in enjoyment. Self-consciousness means the enjoyment of the self, the activity is lived through by the self as a part of itself. Consciousness and self-consciousness, are regarded as identical. Consciousness cannot be an object of knowledge in the same way as physical things are objects of knowledge. Consciousness can not be related to consciousness in the way in which external physical things are related to consciousness. It can be an object of knowing not to another consciousness, but to a being who is superior to a conscious being, that is, who belongs to a higher order of existence, namely, an angel. It is only the lower order of existents

which can be made objects of knowledge to a higher order of being. The distinction which Alexander draws between the act and the object, enjoyment and contemplation, is ultimate. If consciousness is an act, it must always remain an act; it can not be converted into an object. It should be clearly noted, however, that for Alexander enjoyment and contemplation are not to be regarded as two distinct mental acts. It is one and the same mental act which in contemplating a non-mental object enjoys itself.

Alexander thus recognises the essentially subjective character of consciousness, and affirms clearly that it cannot be an object, which is always something non-mental. Consciousness is not a 'cross-section' of the environment, an object alongside of other objects; it is a process, an activity, and essentially distinct from non-mental object. This theory enables him to account for the cognitive situation more satisfactorily than the American realists for whom cognition is a merely physical affair, a transaction between the physical organism on the one hand, and the physical environment on the other. Alexander is emphatic in his insistent upon the fact that the knowledge-relationship is inexplicable unless one of the terms of such relationship be regarded as mental. If the activity of the self is reduced merely to the specific response or the behaviour of the physical organism, and if it is thus conceived merely as an object among other objects, it is difficult to imagine how cognition or awareness can result from the transaction between two objective entities. The knower or the subject in some sense must transcend the object which it knows and must therefore be essentially distinct therefrom. Alexander thus rejects the extreme objectivism of the American realists, but at the same time retains in his theory the essential features of realism. He maintains on the one hand the directness and immediacy of knowledge, and on the other hand the mind independent character of

object. As against representationism he holds that in cognition the object is directly revealed to mind, and at the same time he denies the idealist thesis that there is no object without mind. Further, the recognition of the subjective character of conscious acts enables him to cope with the problem of illusion and error more successfully than it is possible in the objectivistic theories of the American realists. We are not led to hold, by the denial of the subjective, that every content of cognition is equally objective, error as much as truth, the real as much as the unreal. The American realists, having denied the subjective, place errors and illusions on the side of the objective, and in order to explain their distinction from the true and the veridical, they bifurcate the realm of Being so as to find within it place for two kinds of entities, subsistents and existents. The rejection of the subjective thus creates for the American realists insurmountable difficulties. The recognition of the subjective enables Alexander to offer an explanation of the problem of illusion and error.

In many respects, then, the theory of consciousness formulated by Alexander seems to us to be more satisfactory than the extreme objectivistic theory formulated by the American realists. Let us now proceed to deal with the criticisms which Mr. Kali Prasad has levelled against the theory of Alexander. In discussing Meinong's theory of objects Mr. Kali Prasad points out that for him all that is is an object and consequently the act is a component or element in the midst of other elements or objects. But nevertheless Meinong persists in distinguishing between the act and the object because he is under the dominance of Brentano and the Act School. His position is therefore inconsistent, because his ontological theory does not justify the distinction between the act and the object. Holt, whose ontological position is similar to that of Meinong, is more logical and annuls this distinction and defines consciousness as a cross-section

of the environment or as a class of objects. Mr. Kali Prasad next shows that the conclusions of naturalistic realism are even more drastic than those of Holt. It is not disposed to look upon consciousness even as a cross-section or a class of objects. Under the influence of biological sciences it adopts a frankly behaviouristic attitude and defines consciousness as a physical response of the nervous system. Having shown how consciousness has gradually come to be defined in terms of behaviour or physical response, he next proceeds to deal with the theory of Alexander. Although he is not quite explicit, yet from the manner in which he criticises the views of Alexander it seems that he takes Alexander to belong to the group of natural realists. From the exposition of Alexander's ontological and epistemological position given before, it is clear that he cannot be classed either with the natural realists or with the behaviourists. He repudiates clearly the behaviouristic account of consciousness and maintains that mere physical response as such cannot explain the awareness of objects. To constitute consciousness of objects it is not enough that the response should be merely physical and thus exist alongside the object to which it is a response, but it must be something which experiences itself. In responding to the object I must be aware of my response. Every act of consciousness is self-consciousness, in the sense of enjoyment. Thus conscious act is essentially distinct from the object towards which it is directed, and cognition is explicable only on this hypothesis.

The realism of Alexander does not owe its origin to, and is not influenced in any way by, the movement initiated by William James in America. It develops along an entirely different line. American realism directly originates from the speculations of W. James and reaches its natural culmination in the extreme objectivism of Holt and the behaviourism of the natural realists. But the realism of Alexander does not

follow the same line of development. If we bear in mind these two distinct lines along which realism has developed in modern times a good deal of confusion can be avoided. It is true that American realism has culminated in extreme objectivism, and the consequence is entirely due to its presuppositions, its theory of neutral being. But from this it by no means follows that objectivism is the logical sequence of all forms of realism. When, therefore, Alexander asserts the distinction between act and the object as vital, his position cannot be characterised as the betrayal of the fundamental principles of realism. In regard to Alexander's theory of mental act Mr. Kali Prasad approvingly quotes the criticism of Mr. A. K. Rogers. The act, it is said, is not the act *of* something, but an ultimate entity, and so for him consciousness as *knowing* is not a relation, but a subjective entity of a sort, ultimate and indefinable. Alexander never says that the act is not an act of something. The act is always directed towards an object. The direction is according to him one of the characteristic features of cognitive acts. The mental act is enjoyed in the contemplation of the non-mental object. It is one and the same mental act which in the contemplation of the non-mental object enjoys itself. Consciousness as conceived by Alexander is indeed subjective but he would not admit it to be ultimate and indefinable. The position that consciousness is a simple, indefinable, ultimate entity is taken up by the idealists. Alexander with his hypothesis of Space-Time defines consciousness as an emergent quality belonging to mind and which can be ultimately explained in terms of Space-Time. So he does not leave us in mystery about the nature of consciousness. Objectively, it is a spatio-temporal entity existing among other objective entities, but subjectively, it is consciousness.

The cognitive relation, Alexander holds, is a relation of compresence. The relationship of compresence is a universal relation holding between any two finite existents, and should

not therefore be supposed to be distinctive of cognition. The character of the cognitive situation is indicated not so much by the relation of compresence as by the nature of the terms related. The relation between two physical existents is also that of compresence. But there both the terms of relation are physical, whereas in the case of cognition at least one term should be mental. So Alexander does not say that compresence is a specific relation. Further, Mr. Kali Prasad is wrong when he says that "the abstract contentless act can be enjoyed and contemplated but not understood." Alexander nowhere says that the act can be contemplated; for him it can be enjoyed only. He distinguishes between two modes of knowing, enjoyment and contemplation. We contemplate non-mental objects whereas we enjoy our own mind. So if the act is to be known at all, it must be known in enjoyment. We can only live through our mental acts and can never contemplate them as objects. I cannot see anything wrong in what Alexander says here. His theory does not lead us to the metaphysics of the Unknowable, as Mr. Kali Prasad asserts, since he does not deny knowledge of the mental act. It seems that some of the criticisms of the theory of Alexander arise from a misunderstanding of his position.

It appears from the foregoing considerations that consciousness in modern realism does not occupy a central position in the scheme of things. It does not condition the nature of the real, and is not regarded as the ultimate or absolute category. Once the a priori logic of the idealists is abandoned as a useless instrument of philosophic research, consciousness loses its absolute character and comes to be considered as a finite among other finites having no privileged position in the scheme of things except that which it derives from its greater perfection of development as the last and the highest of the empirical existents. If we approach the problem of consciousness in a purely scientific spirit, it cannot be given a

central position in the scheme of reality, it is to be regarded as one among other finite existents within the all-embracing reality. The category of Reality, therefore, looked at from this standpoint is more fundamental than consciousness. Knowing thus falls within reality and is not in any sense prior to it. Thus ontology is not dependent upon epistemology, but epistemology is in a sense dependent upon ontology. The method of philosophy is empirical in an extended sense. Following this method the theory of consciousness is to be formulated strictly on the basis of those features which consciousness reveals in experience. The validity of the hypothesis should be determined by bringing it into verifiable connection with the data which it is supposed to explain. Applying this test it is found that the extreme objectivistic theory of the American realists cannot satisfactorily account either for the cognitive situation or for the problem of truth and error. The theory of Alexander which holds consciousness as essentially dynamical, subjective activity or process, explains these facts more satisfactorily. If our choice lies between the traditional conception of consciousness as a transcendent entity and the extreme objectivism of the American realist on the one hand, and the subjectivistic conception of Alexander on the other, we should not hesitate to accept the latter alternative as more faithful to experience.

The Status of Consciousness in Contemporary Realism.—iii

By

NIKUNJA VIHARI BANERJEE

Ramjas College, Delhi University.

I have read the papers of Mr. Kali Prasad and Dr. Roy with considerable care and have found that they have dealt with certain points bearing upon the subject of the symposium in such a manner that very little is left for me to add on those points. Mr. Kali Prasad's account of the development of the concept of consciousness, however brief it may be, is comprehensive and is of non-controversial character. I need not deal with that part of his paper. Dr. Roy has supplied what was wanting in Mr. Kali Prasad's historical sketch by attempting to trace the development of the concept of consciousness to its various sources. I must here confess that my interest in the history of philosophical concepts and the discovery of the causes of their historical development is not much, although I am aware that they throw considerable light on them. However my real difficulty begins when I come to consider the attitude which Mr. Kali Prasad and Dr. Roy have taken up towards the modern realistic doctrines of consciousness, and the suggestions which they have made to get over the difficulties of these doctrines. Mr. Kali Prasad

accuses contemporary Realism of indecision and sterility. In this I partly agree with him. For I have found that contemporary realism in its solution of the problem of consciousness in some of its aspects has made little advancement and is in fact moored to traditional doctrines. But I am not quite sure that the solution of the difficulties of modern realistic doctrines of consciousness can be found in the phenomenological speculations of Husserl and others. My acquaintance with the present day phenomenological school is so inadequate that I am not competent to pass any judgment upon its merits nor am I able to judge how far Mr. Kali Prasad has followed that school in providing a solution of the difficulties of contemporary Realists. I have therefore decided not to tread upon the ground on which Mr. Kali Prasad stands and shall follow an independent line in criticising the realistic doctrines of consciousness and in suggesting remedies for their difficulties. Dr. Roy is not, however, so doubtful about the success of modern realists in solving the problems of consciousness and, as a matter of fact, credits the greatest success so far attained in this respect, to Alexander. I, like Mr. Kali Prasad, think in a different way, as I have found that Alexander no more than any other realist succeeds in providing a satisfactory solution of the various problems of consciousness.

Before I proceed to the discussion of our problem I must however state that I have followed an altogether different method of approaching the present problem. I have found it necessary first to state the problem of consciousness in its different aspects and then see how far contemporary realists have succeeded in solving them. I have also thought it proper to mention the typical classical solutions of this problem in order to show that modern solutions do not take us further than they. Lastly I must observe that my difference from the modern realists as well as from Mr. Kali Prasad's and Dr. Roy's treatment of them is so great and so vital that I have

no option but to follow an independent line of thought and to leave my predecessors in this symposium undisturbed, so that the readers of this paper may form an independent opinion of the relative merits of my position as well as of that of my predecessors.

I

Of the problems that have received serious consideration in contemporary philosophy, especially in its realistic Schools the most important are those which concern the status of Sense-data and its correlate, the status of consciousness. Although we are here concerned with the latter problem, reference to the former is essential in as much as they are, or at least, have been presented to be interdependent. The peculiar difficulty of the investigation of the current doctrines of consciousness, however, follows from the absence of unanimity among philosophers in regard to the meaning of the term "Consciousness," which is only partially explained by the interdependence of consciousness and sense-data. If sense-data are variously viewed, consciousness which is intimately related to them, must indeed come to be variously conceived. But my reason for stating that the interdependence of consciousness and sense-data does not wholly account for the differences of the views of consciousness is that consciousness is used not only in the sense of perception, external knowledge, or apprehension of the external world but also in the sense of inner apprehension or the self's knowledge of itself. The doctrine of sense-data now-a-days primarily relates to perceptual knowledge, and is rarely associated with self-knowledge, although some older philosophers viz. Malebranche, Locke and Kant tended to obliterate this distinction between perception and self-knowledge and place them on an equal footing by first introducing what they called 'Inner sense', then by treating

inner-sense as parallel to outer sense and lastly by recognising data of inner sense corresponding to the data of outer sense, that is to say, sense-data properly so-called. That being so, the problem of consciousness as a whole is wider than the problem of consciousness in its relation to sense-data, i. e. of consciousness in the sense of perception, and is, as a matter of fact, divisible into two distinct problems viz. of *perception* and *self-knowledge*.

As regards the former problem, it has two aspects in so far as perception, on the one hand, implies certain data out of which its object may be said to be constructed and, on the other, perceiving as such in so far as that is to say, perception, has, to use current terminology, the *objective* and *subjective* aspects. The problem of perception in its objective aspect, is in fact, the problem of sense-data which is distinct from the first division of our problem of consciousness in as much as consciousness as perceiving is distinct from sense-data. Objections against this position may, however, be urged on the one hand, by older materialism according to which consciousness is the epiphenomenon of matter, and the neutral monism of the American New Realists, according to which consciousness like physical things, is ultimately deducible from neutral entities, and on the other, by all those philosophers who hold that sense-data, like consciousness, are mental.

As regards the latter objection, I might indeed satisfy myself by thinking that it does not hold good against the able criticisms urged against subjectivism by modern Realists in general, and especially by Moore, the pioneer of the realistic movement in England. But I will not do that for two reasons. In the first place, these criticisms really miss their mark and fail to disprove the doctrine that sense-data are mental. Let us first take into account Moore's objections against this doctrine. The main point of his anti subjectivist

criticism in his Refutation of Idealism is that the Idealist has been led into this doctrine in virtue of his erroneous view that consciousness and sense-data are *analytically* related and that this doctrine would vanish as soon as it is realised that their relation is really *synthetical*, that sense-data no more depend on consciousness for their existence than the latter depends on the former for its existence. Now, apart from the question whether it is a fact that Idealism really treats consciousness and sense-data as analytically related, Moore's conclusion that sense-data are proved to be physical or, let us say, at least non-mental by the view of the relation between consciousness and sense-data as synthetical,—does not follow in as much as sense-data, even if they are separate from, or are synthetically related to consciousness, may like consciousness, be mental just as two physical things synthetically related to one another may be equally physical, or two minds related to one another in the same manner may be equally spiritual. The position of certain modern Realists e. g. Stout, etc., who are no less insistent on the separation of the act of awareness from sense-data than Moore and his followers and yet regard sense-data as mental, may here be cited as contradictory to Moore's expectation. It must be particularly noticed here that subjectivism is the epistemological counterpart of, and is really deduced from the metaphysical doctrine called Spiritualism, according to which the whole universe including physical things is ultimately spiritual or mental. That being so, the refutation of the subjectivist position that sense-data are mental is not possible in the manner in which Moore and his followers attempt it, but must depend upon a deeper enquiry viz., the enquiry into the metaphysical foundation of that position which they have not undertaken.

Moore found later that although the failure to separate the act of awareness from its object is the foundation of

Idealism, the special argument of this doctrine proceeds from the relativity of sense data. This argument may be expressed as follows: Since it is a fact that one and the same object may, for instance, be apprehended as red under certain circumstances and as gray under certain others and since we can not treat any one of these sense-data as unreal but should rather regard both as real, in as much as both appear to be equally due to some real cause, and yet cannot hold that one and the same independently existing object is both red and green, the conclusion is that these sense-data are real as *mental* and not as *non-mental* or independent. This argument has been very seriously considered by most modern Realists. It is in fact the centre towards which the bulk of new realistic polemic gravitates. Before we proceed to assess the value of the Realist's criticism of this argument it is, however, necessary to analyse it carefully. This argument has two parts. One of these consists in the Idealist's assertion of the reality of conflicting sense-data, both red and green in the above instance being on his view, real. The other consists in his denial of 'independence' and ascription of 'mentality' to them. Now, although the second element in the second part of the argument viz. the ascription of 'the mental status to sense-data presupposes the first part in as much as mentality which is an existential status, could not have been ascribed to sense-data except on the view of them as real, yet the former does not follow from the latter alone but must also presuppose the first element viz. the denial of independence to sense-data. Granted that conflicting sense-data are equally real, as they are on the Idealist's view, there is nothing to prevent their being non-mental i. e. independently real except the denial of their independent reality. This denial on the part of the Idealist, however, follows from the fundamental logical principle of non-contradiction, according to which a thing which is, for ins-

tance, red cannot be not red, i. e. green etc. Now, some of the realists who agree with Idealism in admitting the reality of all sense-data and at the same time seek to avoid their subjectivistic interpretation think that it is possible to maintain the *independent reality* of all sense data without violating that logical principle. Bertrand Russell's attempt to work out this possibility is wellknown and consists in stating that there are, so to say, two different kinds of nonmental, spatial worlds 'the Private' and the 'Common'—the former of which are many and various and are, as a matter of fact, constituted by sense-data of a relative character, whereas the latter, although it is, on his view, constructed out of private sense-data, is somehow relieved of the former's relative character, i. e., is common to all percipients and is, in fact, the physical universe of science. The real point of this position of Russell consists in the substitution of the new logistic conception of the thing as logical 'Construct' for the older Cartesian conception of it as substance, based upon the traditional logical principle of identity. It must be noticed here that while on Descartes' view the opposition between 'common' and 'private' seems to be the same as the opposition between substantiality and unsubstantiality, reality and unreality, according to Russell, the former opposition is not only not the same as the latter but has not even the sense of opposition and consequently we can ascend from the private to the common and descend from the common to the private. However that may be, even if it be conceded in favour of the realists and against Descartes that the opposition between the common and the private is not the same as the opposition between reality and unreality, it is at least an opposition between the unconditioned and the conditioned or contingent,—between the independently existing physical universe and sense-data which, if not dependent upon consciousness, are at least conditioned by physical and physiological processes.

That being so, we fail to understand how by means of Russell's logistic device the construction of the unconditioned and independently existing physical universe out of contingent sense-data is possible ?

The parallelism between Russell's and Berkeley's attempt to avoid the conflict between the theory of perception and the above-mentioned logical principle may be noticed here. Just as Berkeley refers relative sense data to individual minds and the physical universe to the divine mind, so Russell refers the former to private space and the latter to common space. Again just as Berkeley holds that there is no opposition between the world of the individual mind and the world of the divine mind in as much as the former may be said to be a participant in the latter, so Russell holds that there is no opposition between private spaces and common space, the latter being, on his view, a construct out of the former. The advantages and disadvantages of both positions seem to be the same except that Russell may claim greater plausibility for his position on the ground that both worlds—the private as well as the common are, on his view, independent or non-mental whereas on Berkeley's view they are mental. But neither Russell nor any other Realist has justified this claim. This can be shown as follows :

Although, as pointed out above, the Idealist's denial of independence to sense-data in accordance with the above-mentioned logical principle is a presupposition of his view that all sense-data initially accepted by him as real or existent are mental, its real value consist merely in *demonstrating* that sense-data, initially accepted as mental in virtue of the metaphysical doctrine viz., spiritual, *cannot be mental* in view of the logical contradiction that would follow upon the conception of them as independent or non-mental but not in *proving* the proposition that sense-data are mental. That being so, the Realist, even if it be conceded to him that he

has succeeded in showing that the ascription of independence to all sense-data involves no logical contradiction, may at best take away the demonstrative certainty of the Idealistic *proposition* that all sense-data are mental, while the proposition itself stands unaffected, being ultimately dogmatic. This lends additional support to my earlier statement that in order to refute Idealism the realist must dive much deeper than he has done, i.e., must undertake an enquiry into the validity of Spiritualism, the metaphysical aspect of idealism.

I must now mention that from the point of view of strict realism the most objectionable part of the subjectivist argument is the assertion of the reality of all sense-data, which has been quite curiously admitted by most modern realists. Although it is a fact that one and the same object may, for instance, be apprehended as red under certain circumstances and as gray under certain others, it is equally a fact that object must be *either* red or gray and not both red and gray; and consequently either red or gray must be unreal. The question how we are to determine which of the two conflicting sense-data is real and which is not, is indeed difficult but may not be impossible to answer. Even granted that 'the answer is impossible, that does not seem to warrant the ascription of reality to conflicting sense-data. What seems to weigh most with philosophers in this ascription is not so much the *fact* of relativity as the consideration that the conflicting sense-data are all due to real causes. If that be so, illusory and hallucinatory images, which, as physiologists and psychologists would tell us, are also due to certain real causes, are also real. This is a position which must be admitted by those who advocate the reality of all sense-data. But Berkeley, although he is logically committed to it, avoided a scandal by refraining from talking about it, whereas many modern Realists have gone to the extent of openly declaring the reality of illusory and hallucinatory images. Here we must keep ourselves clear

of a serious confusion that may possibly arise. What I am denying is not that illusion etc. are *facts* and are in that sense real but that illusory objects are real. Similarly I admit the *fact* of the relativity of sense-data but deny that all sense-data are constituents of real objects.

The net gain of the recognition of the distinction between real and unreal sense-data is that the above-mentioned logical difficulty in the way of the construction of a satisfactory theory of sense-perception is altogether avoided and consequently the prolixity involved in Berkeley's distinction between the world of the individual mind and the world of the divine mind as well as in Russell's distinction between the private and the common spatial world is eliminated. But that recognition has not the significance of the refutation of the subjectivistic thesis that all sense-data are mental. If some sense-data are unreal, the remaining that are real may very well be mental. As regards the real ground for the strict realistic view that real sense data are non-mental or independent, I cannot exhaustively deal with it here but will merely mention that it is nothing but the simple, ultimate fact of the *givenness* of sense-data. In being conscious of an object the subject is conscious of it as *given*. And this implies that what was *not previously* an object of its consciousness is *now* such an object. The object of the subject's consciousness, in other words, exists not *merely at the moment when* it is an object of consciousness but also *beyond* it. It is thus an *independent* object.

I am not suggesting here that modern Realists are not alive to this implication of the fact of givenness. In point of fact, they yield to none in their insistence on it. But since, as already indicated, they do not distinguish between real and unreal sense data but regard all sense-data as alike real they fail to realise that the so-called sense-data are identically the same as physical things – which is the real implication

of the fact of givenness, and consequently arrive at the new doctrines of sense-data. My second reason for not having recourse to modern realistic criticisms in disputing the idealistic thesis is now within sight and consists in that these criticisms involve the doctrine of sense-data in some form or another and that this doctrine in whatever form it is held, is as I shall immediately show, as unsatisfactory as the older doctrine of ideas.

I have already indicated that the fact of the givenness of sense data may be regarded as the sole ground for the strict realistic view that sense-data are non-mental, or independent and that they are identically the same as physical things which we are said to know by means of perception, so that we cannot have any reason for drawing a distinction between sense-data and physical things, which is generally drawn by modern Realists. The position expressed here is essentially the same as that of the Naive Realist. There is however an important difference between them which is due to the fact that Naive Realism is utterly unconscious of certain phenomena having a bearing upon the theory of perception and consequently makes no attempt to show that these phenomena are not opposed to it, whereas the present position is fully cognisant of them and is thoroughly convinced that they, far from offering any opposition to Naive Realism, are quite in harmony with it. The phenomena in question are relativity of sense-data, error, illusion and hallucination. Now it has been pertinently observed that "in a world in which there was no such thing as error, this theory of the knowledge-relation (i. e. The naive realistic theory) would remain unchallenged; but with the discovery of error and illusion comes perplexity." (The New Realism. pp. 2-3). Here I must add that this perplexity equally follows from the facts of the relativity of sense-data, in as much as it is no less difficult to hold in the Naive realistic manner that sense-data

which conflict with one another, are alike identical with physical things than hold in the same manner that the sense-data of our erroneous experiences are such. However that may be, Naive Realism is wholly ignorant of this perplexity and so has no solution of it, whereas modern schools of realism are fully cognisant of it and, while attempting to remove it, come to differ very widely from Naive Realism. This difference consists in that whereas on the Naive Realistic view the so-called sense-data and physical things are *not distinguishable* but are identical, according to modern realistic theories they are distinguishable, no matter whether they agree with or differ from each other in regard to existential status.

The distinction between physical things and sense-data which is involved in modern Realistic doctrines of sense-data seems, at first sight, to follow necessarily from the above-mentioned phenomena. But my contention is that these doctrines, in the first place, explain away, rather than explain the facts of the relativity of sense-data, error, etc., and secondly fail to construct a satisfactory theory of sense-perception. Let me first take up the former point. I must here begin by emphasising the ultimate qualitative difference between veridical perception and the various kinds of erroneous experience and also by noticing that the same difference is involved in our experiences of relative sense-data in as much as only one among several sets of conflicting sense data can really be said to belong to physical things, whereas the remaining are as unreal as the objects of our erroneous experience and consequently, some of our experiences of the so called relative sense-data are veridical while others are erroneous. That being so, the doctrine of sense-data must be so constructed that this qualitative difference may be explained. But when we turn to the different forms of this doctrine we find that far from explaining that differ-

ence, they all ignore it. According to one of these forms all sense-data are alike *physical*; according to a second they are alike *logical*, i. e. are subsistents; according to a third they are neutral, or, pure beings—neither physical nor mental in character; according to a fourth, as according to the older Representationists e. g. Descartes and Locke, they are mental. All these forms, inspite of differing from one another in regard to the status of sense-data, agree in viewing them as qualitatively alike. That being so, they all must fail to offer an explanation of the qualitative difference between veridical perception and our experience of relative sense-data, error, illusion, etc., with reference to their conception of sense-data. In this respect, the modern Schools of Realism, which profess to be strictly realistic, hardly differ from Idealism which also suffers from the inability to explain that qualitative difference with reference to its view of all sense-data as alike mental.

I must however, observe that modern Realists have done a singular service to Epistemology by emphasising the importance of the phenomena of relativity, etc. in that science. But I cannot forbear mentioning that they seek to mislead us by mixing up the problem of veridical knowledge with the problem created by these phenomena and by regarding the success of the solution of the former as dependent upon the success of the solution of the latter. Since the facts of the relativity of sense-data, error, etc. *are nothing to us except* in so far as they are recognised as such, and since that recognition presupposes right knowledge, the modern Realists have no justification for mixing up the data of veridical perception with the data of erroneous experience and for assigning the same status to both. It is far from my mind to suggest that the problem created by these phenomena is not genuine and requires no solu-

tion. My only question is—what should be the character of its solution ?

The answer is that it can never be metaphysically consecutive in view of the consideration that erroneous objects as well as the diverse shapes sizes, colours, etc. of perceived objects with the exception of those which really belong to such objects and are in point of fact, the object of right knowledge, are non-existents or negations and therefore have no definable metaphysical status. The modern Realistic theories of perception failed to realise this and accordingly vitiate themselves by attempts to define the indefinable and to find out a place for the indefinite and indeterminate alongside of the definite and the determinate, resulting in a hopeless misunderstanding of the true nature of that data of right knowledge. The solution in question can only be empirical or scientific consisting merely in the reference of these phenomena to variable physical, physiological and psychical conditions which in one respect indeed limit the knowing subject, but are in another transcended by it—viz. in that respect in which it is in possession of right knowledge and is thrown into the relation of compresence with the object of its knowledge.

The second point of my previous contention is still more important since it relates to the theory of perception as such. It must first be observed here that all the above-mentioned forms of the modern realistic doctrine of sense data aim at vindicating the strict realistic view that the objects of our perception is the independently existing physical thing—a view which was thrown overboard by the idealistic doctrine that sense-data are ideas. Now my contention really is that they have all failed to realise this aim. I have previously shown how modern Realists have failed to attain their principal object not only by not being able to refute idealism but also by failing to diagonalise the real disease of that theory and shall now add that the real difficulty of Idealism lies not so

much in the doctrine that sense-data are mental as in its consequence viz. that the object of our perceptual knowledge, according to it, cannot be the independently existing physical thing—a consequence from which the modern realistic doctrines have not been able to extricate themselves. The critical realist who substituted subsistents or logical entities for ideas can no more deduce physical existence from subsistence than idealism can from ideas or mental existents. American New realism according to which sense-data are pure beings i.e. are neutral—neither physical nor mental, is open to the following difficulty. Supposing we agree with it in holding that the distinction between the mental and the physical is functional and not substantival, it seems that it has no reason for explaining how one functional collocation of neutral entities is mental and not physical and another physical and not mental. I think that Descartes, in admitting an ultimate and irreducible distinction between the mental and physical, was wiser than those of his successors who, in the name of removing the difficulty of his dualism, have advocated a doctrine which is really more difficult than his own. As regards Stout etc. who like the older Representationists regard sense-data as mental and yet affirm the independent reality of physical things, their difficulty is that since sense-data must be the ultimate constituents of the object of our knowledge, the view of them as mental contradicts that affirmation and renders the construction of physical things impossible. Lastly, those Realists who hold that the data of perception are physical and generally advocate an ultimate distinction between the mental and the physical and correspondingly, between 'introspection' and 'perception' 'enjoyment' and 'contemplation' seem to come nearest to strict Realism. But the truth is that these philosophers are divided from Realism by the consideration that the objects of our perceptual knowledge, in so far as they are

ultimately constituted by sense-data which, on their view, must be contingent on account of their being determined at least by physical and physiological processes can never be relieved of the contingent character of sense-data and, therefore, can never answer to the independently existing objects which we are said to know.

The contingency of the external world, which follows from the last mentioned type of Realism as well as from others is flagrantly opposed to the verdict of common sense and as a matter of fact, renders the so-called Realistic schools of the present day essentially ante-realistic and brings out their secret affinity with Idealism. Time has therefore come for as vigorous an attack against these schools as they themselves have already launched against idealism. I have previously suggested a few lines on which contemporary schools of Realism must be corrected and shall offer a few more suggestions in the sequel.

The main object of this long digression has been to show that modern realistic theories can be no better substitutes for Naive realism than Idealism is and thereby vindicate the Naive Realistic thesis that the so-called sense-data are not distinguishable from, but are identical with physical things. Once this is done, the separation of sense-data from, and their irreducibility to consciousness to which they are given are indisputably established, and consequently not only spiritualism which treats physical things as ultimately mental and serves as the foundation of the main Idealistic thesis, is definitely disproved but also materialism which commits the opposite mistake by reducing consciousness to matter as well as neutral monism which reduces both consciousness and matter to neutral entities, lose their ground. This definitely demonstrates the truth of my main contention that the problem of sense-data falls outside of the problem of consciousness. Now although I have been insisting on the separation

of consciousness from sense data which are on my view identical with physical things, it is far from my mind to accept or defend the traditional view that consciousness is mental and is for that reason separate or distinct from non-mental physical things. My reason for this will be brought out in course of my treatment of the problem of perceiving which I shall immediately take up.

II.

The Problem of Perceiving.

(A)

In dealing with the various forms of the doctrine of sense-data in the previous discussion I pointed out that they have reduced the independent existence of the external world to a contingent status. My present object is to trace the mistake of this reduction to its primary source and suggest a remedy for its correction. This object, as we shall presently see, may be best attained through a discussion of the present-day realistic theory of perceiving. Before I undertake that discussion I must however observe that one of the most important grounds to which the doctrine that sense-data are distinct from physical things, owes its origin, and which, therefore, results in the contingency of the external world, is the reference of perceiving, which is a form of consciousness, to its physical, physiological and psychical conditions. This reference seems to be unavoidable in as much as perceiving is not possible except in so far as some object first acts on the percipient's bodily organism in virtue of certain physical processes, then certain physiological processes arise within his nervous system and lastly his hereditary and acquired mental make-up functions in its characteristic way. Since an object is given to perceiving through such a chain of processes, it cannot, as will be easily argued, be the same as the independently existing physical thing. Hence the plausibility of the doctrine



of sense data. But the main point here is that since our object is to construct a *theory* of perceiving which demands the most satisfactory understanding of the nature of perceiving, we must first see whether there is any reason for going beyond the conditional character of perceiving before we actually stop at the view that perceiving is finally conditioned by a whole gamut of psycho-physical processes, however obvious that view may be. And, as a matter of fact, there are two important reasons which take us beyond the conditionality of perceiving—one *logical* and another *empirical*. The former is that since it is ultimately by means of perceiving that the fact of its own conditionality can be asserted, perceiving itself is unconditioned or at least, is such in one of its aspects. It might be, however, be contended that that act of perceiving which is conditioned and that which asserts its conditionality are separate and that the latter is in itself as much conditioned as the former. But if this argument is pressed to its furthest point, it would result in an infinite regress. From the logical point of view the acceptance of the view of perceiving as conditioned in one aspect and unconditioned in another is however preferable to the admission of a *regressus ad infinitum*. Perceiving, on this view indeed has a paradoxical character. But there is no way out of this position since it has not only the sanction of logical reason but is also demanded by an empirical fact which demonstrates more conclusively than mere logical reasoning, that perceiving, inspite of being conditioned is characterised by unconditionality. This fact is no other than the *compresence* of perceiving and the object perceived. No one can deny that inspite of the space that may separate the percipient from the object of his perception and inspite of all events or processes which may intervene between them, perceiving and its object, as it were, occupy a single point of space and a single moment of time. Thus perceiving is, *par excellence*, the point of contact between

two different kinds of world viz.—the world of persons who happen to be percipients and the world of impersonal things which become perceived objects on the occurrence of the phenomenon called perceiving. This relation of compresence is really unique and for that reason, is indeed very difficult—its difficulty arising from the fact that it can not be understood on the analogy of easily understandable physical relations. The metaphysical theory called Dualism as well as the various forms of the epistemological doctrine of sense-data betray the failure to realise the unique character of this compresence.

The above argument seems to be sufficient for the demonstration of the freedom of perceiving from physical, physiological, and psychical conditions. I may mention here that two prominent philosophers of modern times, Descartes and Kant, for their own reasons, recognised this freedom of perceiving. But, as we shall presently see, they failed to notice that aspect of perceiving in which it is free not only from physical, physiological and psychical conditions but from all possible conditions—which freedom is really implied by “compresence”.

Now the discovery of the error of the view that external objects are apprehended by the percipient through the intervention of the above mentioned conditions or in other words, that knowledge is conditioned by them is not sufficient to finally obviate the erroneous doctrine of the contingency of the external world. For there may be other ways of conceiving an intervening medium between the percipient and the perceivable thing and of arguing the conditionality of perceiving so that the external world may again be reduced to a contingent status. And in point of fact, at least one such way is already widely current and consists in pressing perceiving and its condition into a unity, with the result that perceiving comes to be viewed as an existent, and in

holding that the existent event called perceiving is the intervening medium between the percipient and the perceivable thing. It must be observed here that the bare fact of perceiving, inspite of being determined by conditions which must be *existent*, may not itself be existent and yet may be *real* and thus may not be an intervening medium between the percipient and the perceivable thing, since that medium must be existent and not otherwise—and that the only way to treat it as such a medium is to conceive it as an existent, which conception really follows from the view of perceiving as at once an event and the condition of that event.

It would appear at first sight that the view of perceiving as at once a *condition* and the *conditioned*, i. e., as an existent is more satisfactory than the view of it as determined by extraneous psycho-physical conditions in as much as the former does whereas the latter does not bring out the uniqueness which perceiving really possesses and which divides it from physical events subject to the operation of mechanical conditions. The truth however seems to be the opposite. By holding that perceiving is mechanically conditioned, i. e., that the external object must be given to the percipient through psycho-physical conditions, the latter view indeed reduces the external world to contingency. But since it is not necessary for it to pronounce a definite opinion in regard to the status of perceiving as such or at least it need not necessarily subscribe to the view of perceiving as mental, it may be free from the difficulty which that view may give rise to, in regard to the status of the self that perceives, although it may even then be said to be inadequate on account of its ignorance of the question regarding the status of the self; whereas the former view not only reduces the external world to contingency by means of its view of perceiving as an existent and therefore as an intervening medium between

the percipient and the perceivable thing but also finds itself confronted with the problem of the status of the self in virtue of its definite view of perceiving as a form of mental existent which leaves it no option but to solve the problem in the most objectionable manner. This solution is classical and was offered by Descartes. According to him consciousness which includes perceiving is the attribute or essence of the self. "Perceiving" is, in point of fact, as much a temporary event in the life-history of the Ego as "being perceived" is in that of a physical thing. So by viewing perceiving as the essence of the self, Descartes really mistakes a contingent state of the self for its concrete and complete existence and thereby reduces the self to a contingent status. Contemporary realistic theories of perceiving, I shall now show, are not free from the difficulties of the traditional theories.

(B)

I must mention at the outset that contemporary Realists, as a class have not devoted so much thought to the problem of perceiving as they have devoted to the problem of sense-data. This is evident from the fact that in all the different forms of their doctrine of sense-data an attempt to remove the difficulties of the older doctrine of ideas is clearly traceable whereas in their doctrine of perceiving most of them with the exception of a few seem to be moored to tradition. We may here separately consider the views of perceiving of the different schools, without expecting however that they must all differ fundamentally from one another.

1. We may first take up the position of that group of Realists who hold that sense-data are physical. Moore, Alexander and Bertrand Russell, (so far as his earlier writings are concerned) are the most prominent members of this group. It must be first observed here that these Realists who, like other Realists of the present day, aim at

obviating Idealism, think that this aim can be attained only by showing that sense data are physical. And they hold that this can be done in the first instance by keeping clear of the idealistic view of sense-data as conditioned by perceiving, i. e. by the mental existence called consciousness which necessarily results in the main idealistic proposition that sense-data are mental, and secondly by positively declaring that sense-data are conditioned merely physically i. e. are conditioned only by external objects, sense organs etc. In this they easily ignore the truth that the true interest of Realism cannot be furthered and the real consequence of idealism cannot be averted except on the realisation of the unconditioned aspect of the data given to the percipient. However, they further hold that perceiving is a *mental* act i. e. is the act of awareness. And in this they obviously admit a qualitative difference between the mental and the non mental. Moore treats this difference as ultimate and in his Refutation of Idealism stresses the importance of the ultimate character of this difference with the greatest force. He further seeks to account for the failure on the part of philosophers to notice the distinctness of the act of awareness by means of his doctrine of the diaphaneity of awareness. This 'act' on his view is so transparent that when we look for it we miss it and only see the data which are given to it. Russell in his earlier position also views the distinction between awareness and sense-data as ultimate. There is, according to him, the subject on one side and the objects on the other and the subject apprehends the data produced by the latter in conjunction with sense-organ. But while both Moore and Russell thus eschew the metaphysical attempt to resolve the ultimate character of that difference, Alexander like American New Realists makes a metaphysical attempt to get over it by reducing both mind and matter, the mental and the physical ultimately to Space-time. However, that

may be, from the epistemological point of view Alexander like Moore and Russell holds that the act of awareness and sense-data are distinct—the former being mental and the latter physical.

Now in holding that perceiving is not a condition of sense-data these philosophers not only seek to avoid idealism but recognise an important truth. Again, while thus setting aside the most objectionable conception of the relation between perceiving and sense-data viz. as the relation between the *condition* and the *conditioned*, they seem to admit the right conception of that relation viz. as the relation between that to which something is given and that which is given i.e. as the relation of compresence. The fact however is that they in the first place miss the true sense of compresence and secondly fail to account for it. Let us take the former point first. Alexander, while realising the uniqueness of the phenomenon called perceiving, holds that the relation of compresence which it implies, is not in itself unique and that its uniqueness follows from the peculiarity of its terms. The relation between the table and the floor and the relation between the percipient and the table, *as relations*, are, on his view, of the same kind; and the fact that the latter is knowledge and the former is not, is according to him, due to the latter's having the percipient instead of the table as one of its relata. In this Alexander obviously ignores the ultimate qualitative differences of relations. Even in regard to spatial relations, we find that two physical things may stand in different relations to one another on different occasions so that the relata are the same while relations are different. Now just as we distinguish between such relations as coexistence, succession etc. on account of their individual peculiarity, so we must distinguish between compresence and any of these relations. Not only that; compresence must be distinguished from, and must be said to be in a class apart

from all relations which are spatio-temporal, in view of the fact that the percipient and its object come together in spite of the space and time which may divide them. Alexander, in spite of merely asserting the uniqueness of knowledge, fails to notice this peculiarity of compresence and may be said to understand it on the analogy of physical relations in virtue of his mistaken view that all relations are qualitatively alike. Moore, unlike Alexander, makes no secret of his misunderstanding of the true nature of compresence and in his essay on "The Nature and Reality of the Objects of Perception" openly declares that the relation of the object and the percipient is a spatial one, i.e. of togetherness in one space like the relation between the table and the floor.

Secondly, so far as Moore and Russell are concerned, since the distinction between perceiving regarded as mental and sense-data regarded as physical is, on their view ultimate, compresence must, according to them, be theoretically impossible. In point of fact, the problem of awareness of sense-data is as difficult at their hands as the problem of mind body was at the hands of older Dualists. It may be stated here that the present view of sense-data as physically conditioned—the view, i.e., that the data of perception, prior to their being given to it, are fully formed by the operation of physical causes, however satisfactory it may otherwise be, is not only subject to the difficulty just mentioned, but also involves the main difficulty of the more general view viz. that sense-data are at all conditioned, which as previously observed, consists in the reduction of the external world to contingency. As regards Alexander, he seems to be free from the present difficulty of dualism, in so far as he holds that mind and physical things are ultimately reducible to, or are deducible from some common entity viz. Space-time. The plausibility of this attempt on the part of Alexander to get rid of dualism would entirely depend upon the success

of his metaphysical construction of ultimate reality as space-time.

Again their view of perceiving as a mental act seems to be a great improvement upon the older Cartesian view of it as the essence of the self in so far as the former does and the latter does not involve the recognition of the really temporary character of the event of perceiving. Their view rightly points out that the self perceives only under certain circumstances and not always. Nevertheless, the ultimate gain of this improvement seems to be very little. Whereas Descartes, by means of mistaking a temporary state of the self viz. perceiving for its essence really reduced the ego to a contingent status, notwithstanding his admission of the soul-substance, these philosophers, who profess to proceed empirically and have, on the side of the mind, nothing but temporary and contingent mental acts, can conceive of the self either by assigning these acts to a spiritual substance accepted on merely a priori grounds, contrary to their initial intention, or by making an attempt in the manner of old empiricists and in strict accordance with their original intention, to construct the ego out of contingent mental acts. Bertrand Russell in his earlier position and Moore seem to be open to the former alternative whereas Alexander who sticks fast to empiricism all through, accepts the latter.

We may next turn to the Critical Realists' view of perceiving. These philosophers, as we have previously seen, hold that sense-data are logical subsistents and these data are mechanically conditioned. From this it would seem to follow that the external world, on this view, must be as contingent as it was on the view of Moore and others. But the fact is that Critical Realists seek to avoid this difficulty by means of a twofold device viz. their recognition of the difference between sense-data and the physical thing in regard to existential status—the former being subsistent and the latter

existent, and their peculiar conception of perception which, on their view, consists in the awareness of sense-data, together with the apprehension, or, to use Drake's own word, "imagining" of the external object which is logically implied by sense-data, that difficulty vanishes altogether.

The distinction between sense-data and the external object which is involved here, agrees with the similar distinction which older Representationists drew except in that sense-data are mental existents on the view of the older Representationists, whereas they are mere subsistents on the Critical Realist's view. But if, as the Critical Realist himself says, the view of sense-data as mental cannot make room for the belief in the physical thing, the view of them as non-existent subsistents can have no more success in making room for a belief in the existent object. So the Critical Realist's device cannot save the external world from being reduced to contingency.

Then as regards the subjective side of perception, the Critical Realist's view of it is indeed an improvement upon, and a corrective of the view of Alexander etc. according to whom perceiving consists merely in the subject's reception of the effects produced by the object, i.e. in the mere awareness of sense-data. This view misses the real meaning of compresence, which implies that the subject and the object are alike important in cognition. The Critical Realists follow Kant in correcting the mistake of Moore and others by holding that perceiving consists not only in the subject's passive awareness of sense-data but also includes an active process viz. believing or imagining,—Compresence, as I understand it, signifies revelation of the object to the subject—which is such that it *can only be stated* but cannot be causally explained. Once the idea of its causal explanation is set on foot, the step which philosophers must take is to avail themselves at first of the scientific concept of mechani-

cal causation and ultimately of transcendental causation and declare that perceiving involves the subject's activity or transcendental causality. But the right course is not to make use of the causal category in any form in understanding perceiving.

The Critical Realists, like the former group of Realists, admit the distinction between mental states e.g. perceiving etc. and physical things as well as sense-data and like Moore and Russell regard this distinction as *ultimate*. Some of them e.g. Drake, have sought to establish the ultimate character of this distinction through a polemical discussion with the American New Realists who reduced both mind and matter to neutral entities. However that may be, these philosophers seem to be confronted with the same problem as to how things can be said to be given to perceiving. Drake says that "perceiving is a *logical*, essential, virtual grasp of objects, not the existential identity of object and experience". But what does he mean by the subject's *logical grasp* of the object? It is by considerably modifying the notion of mental states that Drake explains his notion of this logical grasp. Mental states on Drake's view are not non-physical but include some of the physical qualities—at least, the most general of them. Drake's "mental states" as a matter of fact, appear to be similar to Kant's "schemes" which partake of the nature of universal categories as well as of particular sense data. Drake's attempt almost amounts to a surrender of the view of the distinction between experience and object as ultimate and really brings him into the company of Alexander and the American New Realists. But this is not the most objectionable point; finding himself unable to affirm an actual relation between experience and object Drake declares their relation to be *virtual* or *logical*. But this implies a serious misunderstanding of the nature of perceiving. For the proposition, e.g., "I see

the table" really means that 'I *actually* see the table, whereas on Drake's view, it would mean "*As if* I see the table". But every act of an erroneous perception and the recognition of its erroneous character are *two acts* and *not one*, it is wrong to press them into a unity and declare that all acts of perception signify a *virtual* and not an *actual* relation between experience and object.

The Critical Realists and the older Representationists agree in affirming the independent reality of physical things as well as the self. Again, they agree so far as our knowledge of the self is concerned in as much as the data of this knowledge, according to both, are mental states. The self, on the view of the Critical Realist, as on that of the old Representationist, is the independent reality which is implied by mental states. The difficulty of this position is that the construction of the independent reality of the self from contingent mental states is an impossible task.

Stout etc. substantially agree with the Critical Realists in regard to our present problem,—in spite of their difference from the latter regarding the status of sense-data. In viewing sense-data as mental in the manner of older Representationists these philosophers are indeed under a great difficulty which I have previously noticed.

As regards perceiving as such, they rightly recognises its temporary and contingent character, and by giving up the older Cartesian conception of it as the essence of the soul, agree with other Realists in holding that it consists in mental acts. But they differ from Alexander etc. in finding that the purely empirical interpretation of perceiving as constituted merely by awareness, is inadequate, and agree with the Critical Realists in advocating the Kantian empirico-rational understanding of it as awareness mediated by a logical process or an element of thought. They therefore, commit the same mistake in understanding compresence as

we have previously noticed in the case of the Critical Realists. Again, although in virtue of their view of sense-data as mental they avoid a difficulty which other Realists can not—viz. in regard to the possibility of the givenness of sense data, they lay themselves open to a fresh difficulty in virtue of that very view—the difficulty how physical things, by acting on sense-organs, can give rise to data of a mental character. Lastly as regards the self, their theory of it is essentially the same as that of the Critical Realists and so is open to the difficulty of the latter.

We have so far seen that the Realists, agree amongst themselves in so far as they all proceed on the assumption that the universe has two distinct sides viz. the mental and the physical or, rather, the subjective and the objective—which they find sufficiently demonstrated by the fact of knowledge, necessarily implying the knower and the object known. But the American New Realists hold that the universe consists merely of objects and that there is nothing which can be called subjective. They don't, however, deny that there are such things as knowledge or rather consciousness, the self or the subject etc., but they hold that these are not *sui generis* but are deducible from objects. They are convinced that the independent reality of the external world cannot be vindicated as long as we continue to admit the independent reality of the subjective.

My contention now, is that these philosophers are wrong in attributing their failure to vindicate the independent reality of the external world to the admission of the independent reality of the subject, and that if they reduce the subjective to the objective, they fail to account for that side of the universe which is ordinarily regarded as subjective viz. that which consists of knowledge, or rather consciousness, the self etc. Holt, who is the most prominent representative of American New Realism, holds that consciousness or perceiving

is physically conditioned and that it is dependent on the reaction or response of the nervous system. Again, he states that consciousness is not in the nervous system but outside it. Now the question is : on which side of the nervous system ? Other realists admit two distinct sections of reality on the two sides of it viz. the subjective and the objective and assign consciousness to the former section, whereas these philosophers who admit only one section, relegate consciousness to the latter. They do not, however hold that consciousness is coextensive with the whole realm of objects which spreads beyond the nervous system but state that a specific response of the nervous system cuts off only a small cross-section of the realm of object and that consciousness is the aggregate of the objects included in the cross-section thus cut off.

The difference between a *mere object* and an *object that is known* is, on this view, that the latter stands in relation with an organic response while the former does not. But the difficulty is that although the fact of an object's being known presupposes an organism's response to it, the presence of that response does not necessarily result in the knowledge of it. This really means that there may be unconscious responses. But Holt seems to get over this difficulty by holding that unconsciousness is really consciousness and thereby implying the absurd position that even in a state of dreamless sleep when our organism may respond to stimuli, we must be conscious. Secondly, the cross-section of the objective world, which is cut off by the organic response must, on his view be the object as well as the consciousness of it. That being so, the object is inseparable from the consciousness of it. Since by an object is meant something definite and determinate, i.e. what Holt calls a cross-section of the objective world and not the indeterminate world of neutral entities and since the object as such a cross-

section is inseparable from consciousness, Idealism follows as a necessary consequence. Thirdly, not to speak of the deduction of that special form of particular actual fact called consciousness from neutral entities which are universal logical beings characterised by mere possibility, it is impossible to deduce particular actual existents as such—no matter whether objective or subjective, from the latter. Drake rightly observes "You cannot deduce existence from logical terms and propositions. The essence of existence is not existence itself. You can have the essence consciousness in a conceptual universe. But to have actual consciousness you have to have really existing minds". Fourthly although Holt says that the object and the consciousness of it are not separated by anything but are the two sides of one and the same thing, the truth really is that Holt altogether misunderstands the nature of compresence in so far as he fails to notice that compresence subsists between two terms which are not reducible to one another and so are such that one of them cannot be said to be the same as the other in another aspect. Lastly Holt's theory of consciousness is fundamentally defective in that the subject, Ego, or the I which is necessarily involved in every act of consciousness, has no place in it. He would indeed, hold that our conscious life is governed by one law, one supreme purpose, to which all our actions are subordinated and which is the I in the proper sense of the term. But the difficulty is that the category of purpose is of a relative character in that it implies not only that to which the purpose belongs but also that to which it is directed. That being so, the unity of the self as the unity of such purpose cannot really be said to be its own unity. Moreover, although it is true that great men are actuated by a unity of purpose in most of their activities, to reduce the unity of the self to the unity of purpose is to deny the self to most human beings. Modern Realists, no less than other philosophers have failed

to vindicate the independent reality of the external world as well as of the self on account of their failure to understand the true nature of consciousness especially of perceiving.

I suggest the following as the remedy for the difficulties of the Realists. In the first place, we must realise that knowing, perceiving or, for that matter, any other mode of consciousness, although it logically presupposes certain conditions viz., physical, etc., is, as an actual fact, unconditioned, so that that which is given to it may be what is in itself. I have deliberately used the word "may" here in order to indicate that the identity of a given data with the external object would depend not only on the unconditionality of perceiving but also on what status we assign to it. This really brings in my second point. That identity, which is absolutely needed for the vindication of the independent reality of the external world, would be possible provided we hold that knowing, perceiving etc., are *relations* and not existents or qualities of existents. The Realists of modern times indeed mention cognitive relations, and yet regard knowing, perceiving etc., as mental acts which are existents. Mental acts as existents cannot themselves be relations, but stand in need of being related to its data in virtue of some relations, which is non-existent for these philosophers. William James did a signal service to philosophy by first raising his doubt about the existence of consciousness, and he was perfectly right in holding that it does not exist but he failed to see that it does not exist because it is a relation. Now perceiving as a relation is unique ; and on account of its uniqueness it is comprehension which is qualitatively distinct from other kinds of relation.

The peculiarity of relation is that while it implies relation which it relates, it does not enter into the existence of them. So the physical thing, which is given to perceiving, is no more conditioned, determined or modified by perceiving than

the table which stands in the relation of co-existence with the chair, is, in any way affected by that relation. Thus it is the view of perceiving as relation that alone can vindicate the independent reality of the external world. This is not however, the only purpose which this view can serve. For, on this view, perceiving as relation no more enters into or affects the existence of the self, than the existence of the external object so that the self is an independent reality, being thus free from the determination of perceiving etc. However different our cognitive activity may be from our moral activity, they both agree in that they equally bring the self and the not-self into relation with one another. *That being so, there seems to be nothing to prevent us from arguing that cognition is characterised by the same unconditionality which Kant claims for moral activity. Kant was indeed very bold in extricating knowledge from the operation of every kind of mechanical principle, but ultimately succumbed to the influence of the traditional causal conception of knowledge in subjecting knowledge to the transcendental activity of the logical self.

III

The Problem of Self-Knowledge.

By the term, 'self-knowledge' is here meant the self's *apprehension of itself*, corresponding to its apprehension of the external world—no matter whether apprehension as a process is alike or different in nature in the two cases. This serves to eliminate an important meaning of the word 'knowledge', namely, that we do not or cannot apprehend a thing and yet *can assert that it exists or is real* in some sense. Abstract mathematical knowledge as well as our knowledge of what Kant called noumenal or supernatural. e. g., immortality etc. are instances of knowledge in this sense. Since knowledge in the present sense is fundamentally different from knowledge in the sense of apprehension, I might call

the former *logical awareness* and the latter *empirical apprehension* in order to express their difference. There is yet another sense of the term 'self-knowledge' which is also precluded by the view of sense-knowledge as a form of empirical apprehension. It was clearly brought out by Descartes in his famous statement : "cogito ergo sum". The self, on his view, is neither empirically apprehended nor is asserted to exist in virtue of what I have called logical awareness, but is said to know itself in the sense that it is, on account of having consciousness as its essence, a self-luminous or self-revealed existent.

Now, as regards the modern Realists those among them, who believe in the possibility of self-knowledge, agree among themselves in starting with the distinction between the independently existing self and mental acts and in holding that the former can be said to be known in the sense that its existence can on some ground or grounds be asserted, while the latter can be *apprehended*. In regard to the nature of this apprehension they however differ from one another, and, as a matter of fact, hold two distinct views. One section of them e.g., the Critical Realists, like Malebranche, Locke and Kant, state that mental acts must be apprehended as indirectly and mediately as physical things, whereas another section which includes Alexander etc., hold that this apprehension is direct and immediate. However, I have already shown that none of the important schools of contemporary Realism have been able to construct a satisfactory theory of the self. Then as regards the question how far they have been able to make out a case for the possibility of our apprehension of mental acts, I might also state at once that since mental acts, as previously shown are not existents but relations and since relations, although they can be said to be known in some sense, are certainly not known in the sense that they are *apprehended*, the question of that possibility can not arise.

Now when we turn to the writings of these philosophers in our search for the *positive* grounds on which they affirm the possibility of our apprehension of mental acts, we find that all that they have done in this respect is to state dogmatically that such apprehension is a fact. Alexander grants without question that mental acts are lived by the mind, that the mind "enjoys" them. Enjoyment, on his view, involves no object and so is wholly immanent in the self, whereas "contemplation" or perceptual knowledge transcends some object outside the self. Alexander's whole position here may be summed up in one sentence of his own. "My self knowledge is knowledge consisting in my self." The Critical Realists likewise assert that we can "introspect" not necessarily mental acts themselves but certainly their appearances. "Like outer perception" says Drake, "it (introspection) gives us, strictly, merely, a passing show of appearances, which may or may not be the actual character of the mental states introspected."

Now both of the above positions assume that mental acts are existents, which I am not questioning for the present. I must however observe that the Critical Realists, who place self-knowledge on the same footing as perception by holding that just as in the latter we pass on from sense-data empirically apprehended to physical things themselves by means of the non-empirical processes called "imagination," "projection" or "belief," so in the former we pass on from empirically apprehended appearances of mental acts to mental acts themselves by means of the same non-empirical process, must find as much difficulty in accounting for our knowledge of mental acts themselves as they have already found in accounting for our knowledge of physical things themselves. Now since both perception and self-knowledge, on the Critical Realist's view, really shut us within the domain of mere

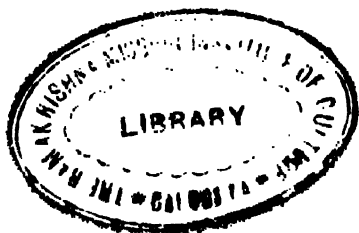
appearances and can show no way to physical things and mental acts as they are in themselves, we have no means of distinguishing between the appearances of physical things and of mental acts and consequently cannot distinguish between perception and self-knowledge. Be it noted, however, that in spite of this absurdity of his position, the Critical Realist is fully cognisant of an important truth viz. that knowledge as empirical apprehension must involve the distinction between subject and object and that self-knowledge is no exception to this. The Critical Realists thus throw out a challenge to Alexander and others who hold that the self, in living its mental acts, enjoys or apprehends them. But the real point here is ignored by both and can be indicated thus. Knowledge is unquestionably a relation between two terms, and is direct if nothing intervenes between the two terms except that relation and indirect if what intervenes between them is not merely the relation but some form of existence. In other words, knowledge *qua* knowledge—no matter whether it is held to be direct or indirect, presupposes two distinct terms. That being so, to hold that self-knowledge, which obviously does not involve two distinct terms, is an actual form of knowledge is to admit an absurdity. The Critical Realists seek to avoid this absurdity by stating that one and the same mental act can itself be two distinct terms demanded by the cognitive relation, in so far as it is *in itself* and also *appears to itself*—which is an equally absurd position; whereas Alexander and others dogmatically assert that it is not absurd to hold that knowledge e. g. self-knowledge involves only one term. That self knowledge i. e. apprehension of mental acts is not a fact has also been held; but Moore points out that this is due to their diaphanous character. Broad makes a strenuous effort to vindicate the fact of our knowledge of mental acts. He states that just as we can have a direct non-inferential knowledge of the relating relation of “between” when a pattern

of three dots in a line is presented to our inspection, so we can be said to apprehend a mental act in the sense that we have a direct non-inferential knowledge of the relating relation of a "complex" which is constituted by such "terms" as toothache etc., and is a mental act. (cf. *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, pp. 308-309). This, far from vindicating the fact of self-knowledge in his sense of the term, rather explains it away. For, in the first place, "mental act" which is here understood as a relating relation is not the *existent* event which Broad understands by that term; secondly, although it is a fact that we can know relations, our knowledge of them is certainly not empirical apprehension so that self-knowledge which on Broad's view is the knowledge of a relation, cannot be empirical apprehension, which, according to him, it should be.

The only form of the doctrine of self-knowledge which cannot be *theoretically* disproved is that according to which we can directly and immediately apprehend mental acts. This is due to the fact that it is ultimately dogmatic. Our choice, therefore, lies between the present form of that doctrine and the view that the empirical apprehension of these mental acts is not a fact—which may also be said to be dogmatic in character. So far as I am concerned, I choose the latter alternative. Since the so-called mental acts are nothing but *relations* and since relations are such that we can be *logically aware* of them but cannot *empirically apprehend* them, the present form of the doctrine of self-knowledge is absolutely unacceptable from the point of view of this paper. This does not, however imply that by self knowledge I mean logical awareness of the cognitive relations. Since the cognitive relation, on my view, is something which merely relates the self and the object of its knowledge but does not enter into the existence of either, the logical awareness of it can no

more be self knowledge than knowledge of the external world. Self-knowledge in the strictest sense of the term is, on my view, the logical awareness of the independently existing self.





106/IND



91064

